



# ***Daily Report***

## ***Supplement***

# **Sub-Saharan Africa**

***MAURITIUS:***  
***The Man, Sir Gaetan Duval:***  
***"The Right to Excess"***

FBIS-AFR-89-216-S  
Thursday  
9 November 1989

# Sub-Saharan Africa SUPPLEMENT

## MAURITIUS:

### The Man, Sir Gaetan Duval: "The Right to Excess"

FBIS-AFR-89-216-S

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**The Man, Sir Gaetan Duval: "The Right to Excess"**

34190376 Port Louis LE DROIT A L'EXCES in French  
Dec 87 pp 1-153

[Book by Alain Gordon-Gentil: "The Right to Excess" based on interviews and research, describing the style, methods and ideas of Sir Gaetan Duval, popular leader of the PMSD [Mauritian Social Democratic Party]; published in December 1987 by Caslon Printing, 153 pages; plus one page with a quotation; one, with the author's foreword; and one, with a short biography. The book is dedicated to: "Nicole, who knows." Passages within slantlines in English or Creole, as noted, in the original.]

[Text] *At the age of 15, he decided to think for himself; he has not stopped since. That is why he was always to see events from so far above (...).*

*His love of glory was so great that he believed his popularity, this glory expressed in money, could add to it; and he never forgave anyone who failed to recognize it and was bold enough to question it. He later loved freedom passionately, for himself and for others...*

(Excerpt from Alexandre Dumas' speech on Victor Hugo, delivered before the Academie Francaise on 31 March 1987, to welcome Leconte Delisle to the Academie.)

**Foreword**

Perched on a platform made up of our piled up ballots, politicians have become the privileged witnesses of our time. History unfolds with them, through them and, sometimes, in spite of them. With all the subjectivity that they can muster, they must make decisions that affect our lives.

Entangled in a daily life filled with tactics and strategy, they do not often allow the core of their inner beliefs to come to the surface.

This book is not a biography of Sir Gaetan Duval, this man who has been on the forefront of the Mauritian political scene for over 30 years. He chose to be portrayed candidly. His aim is to reveal the inner drives of a man who set up residence on the avenues of power. Who is he? What does he expect? Does he know where he is going?

The purpose of this book is to try to find those answers. It is the result of 18 hours of interviews with Sir Gaetan Duval and of a personal investigation that lasted several months.

A.G.G.

**Biography**

Sir Gaetan Duval (a lawyer by profession) was born on 9 October 1930 in Rose-Hill. Vice prime minister, deputy from Beau Bassin/Petite Riviere and leader of the Mauritian Social Democratic Party, he has been one of the personalities at the forefront of Mauritian politics since the sixties. Deputy from Curepipe in 1960, under the banner of the Mauritian Party, he rapidly climbed the ladder of his party and, within a few years, he became its deputy chief, by Jules Koenig's side, then its leader. He was the urban councilor of Curepipe in 1960, 1961, and 1963. He chaired the town council between 1964 and 1968. In 1963, he was elected deputy from Curepipe and in 1967 from Port Louis. He was lord mayor of the capital from 1969 to 1973, opposition leader from 1967 to 1969, and then minister of foreign affairs from 1969 to 1973 in the PT [Labor Party]/PMSD/CAM [Muslim Action Committee] coalition government. Once again opposition leader between 1973 and 1976, he was defeated in the elections of 1976 and 1982. For awhile, he remained opposition leader, then he resigned from Parliament. In 1983, heading the poll, he won the Curepipe election and, once again heading the poll, he was re-elected from Beau Bassin in 1987.



**Chapter 1: Voluntary Captivity**

Sir Gaetan Duval was a political man. Today he is a man of power. He confides: "I do not see myself in the opposition." Such a statement is better understood when it is being voiced by a 57-year-old man, shaken by a succession of struggles, who can no longer envision his mission or his career (maybe the two intermingle) other than through the fascinating executive power triangle. But the unchanging certitude that the opposition cannot be considered as an ultimate goal, but simply as the anteroom of supreme power, is probably the core of any politician.

Already by tackling the subject, Sir Duval stands out from among the others. Although they are almost unanimous in their refusal to be in the opposition, few politicians would dare acknowledge it to a journalist, much less to be entered into a book. To be sure, Duval may be a prisoner of power, but prisoners who forge their own bars often indulge in the luxury of being happy in their voluntary captivity.

The meteoric rise of this man is rather amazing. For 30 years, he has been the powerful embodiment of the Mauritian right and he admits that he could just as well have been a leftist. "I could have begun my career with the Labor Party." We could be taken aback by Sir Gaetan's remark when we know the ideological abyss that separated Maurice Cure's party from the Mauritian Social Democratic Party. The former was fighting for workers' emancipation, the main target being the country's accession to independence; and the latter was anchored in a conservatism of the purest British tradition. But that would be underestimating this man of instinct and intuition, whose vibrant ideology is an exotic mixture of pragmatism and opportunism.

When Duval returned to his country in 1956, he sensed very quickly that the gap between the Labor and Mauritian Parties was widening. All of the island's ethnic groups were gathered within Maurice Cure's party, all of them united by the same struggle. Duval already knew what he wanted. "To bring back unity within the Creole population." With this goal in mind, he believed, and rightly so, that there was no limits to his hopes for a career. How could it be otherwise? Duval, the young lawyer freshly graduated from his studies in France and in England, had just grabbed the only available opportunity. This political flair—to be aware when the situation calls for a fight—was to remain one of his greatest strengths throughout his whole career. Liberation was the business of Ramgoolam's and the others. The slot was filled. To become a reactionary was, therefore, the only choice left to him. He was to play that card with brilliance and intelligence until 1967. After talking with him at length, I am convinced that had the slot filled by Ramgoolam been vacant in 1956, Duval would have become the champion of independence with the same brilliance and the same intelligence.

Duval is not an ideologist in the usual meaning of that word, that is to say, someone who adheres to a system of ideas making up a doctrine. He built his career around a few essential inner convictions. This method, very much Duval's own, has at least one advantage: only rarely is a person practicing it untrue to himself. The range of action of the politician without ideology is as vast as the Sahara. It also takes a great deal of bad luck to stumble on a stone in that type of terrain. The world of ideology is so full of warning signals that many who venture into it must, at a some point, give it up partially (or totally) if he wants to be in step with his time. The only ideologies that endure are those that mature.

We saw a Ramgoolam, lulled by the champions of the Fabian Society in the England of the twenties, end his race with a party that nothing, or practically nothing, differentiated from the PMSD. We saw a Paul Berenger, a product of the May 1968 barricades, land 15 years later in a social democracy, which had become a real catchall.

Confronted by the social and economic realities of Mauritius, these two men had to re-adjust their aim so as to find themselves in harmony with the soul of a population that they were aspiring to lead.

Duval did not modify his ideological policy for the simple reason that he never had one. Consequently, after a 30-year-plus career, his inner consistency has been almost total. I have already mentioned the guiding principles on which he has hinged his action. They are simple, direct, and easy to grasp. If Duval's electoral clientele is so "loyalized," it is certainly because the cult of personality has entered into the picture, but the clarity of the message has something to do with it. The Duval "ideology" can be summarized in a few words. It is not Marx's *The Capital*. The whole program consists of: alignment of the West against the whole world, limitless economic liberalism, the law of the marketplace simply becoming law, and Reaganism before Reagan. The rest, all the rest, is left entirely to the chief's intuition and instinct. With his sense of improvisation on a given theme, had Sir Gaetan chosen to become a jazz musician, he could have followed in the footsteps of a Dexter Gordon or a Bill Evans.

Furthermore, when his innate taste for a show-business-type life is added to this sense of improvisation, we understand why that man's career looks like Agathe Godard's social notebook in "Paris Match."

But let us not be fooled by it. Behind this facade stands what he wanted to build for Mauritius. He succeeded. The power of persuasion of that man, who succeeded in convincing everyone that he was right, is the reason why the fate of Mauritius is so closely linked to that of the European continent, and our relations with South Africa so tight, despite international pressures. If we take all the governments that succeeded each other since Duval's arrival in high political circles, we will note that, from Ramgoolam to Berenger, not forgetting Jugnauth, economic and foreign policies have always been Duval's.



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This was true even when, in office in 1982, the left was modestly but vainly trying to prove that its economic choice was different.

Certain important political events took an entirely different turn because Duval "sensed" something at the very last minute. When he "senses" something, he lets his instinct guide him, even if it entails abandoning in a few seconds a course of action patiently developed over several weeks.

In 1969, after a quarrel with Andre Masson, the editor in chief of *Le Mauricien*, over the merits of a PMSD/PT coalition, Duval announced a meeting at the Place du Quai. He intended to speak about his party joining the Ramgoolam government. Masson, a formidable editor-in-chief, led the campaign against this coalition, which he christened "Coalition at All Costs." Conflicting voices were being raised within the PMSD itself. Maurice Lesage and Raymond Rivet were voicing their differences publicly.

Believing strongly in his power of persuasion, Duval arrived at the meeting perched on his supporters' shoulders. He intended to convince a crowd that, he thought, was ready to accept wholeheartedly its chief's remarks. However, when he got up on the stage to announce his decision, he noticed a group of supporters waving "No to the Coalition" placards. He immediately sensed this shift in mood. A few seconds more and Rivet and Lesage would have won. They thought that Duval, the undisputed chief, was about to get his just deserts. But that was underestimating the political animal's preservation instinct. To his lieutenants' detriment, who an hour earlier had listened to him ardently defending this coalition, he announced to the crowd that nothing had been decided; caution had to be exercised concerning Ramgoolam; and he would think some more about the issue. He thus defused two bombs: he officially let it be known that he was discussing a coalition, but that it was not a cause for concern.

Yet, at that very moment, he privately knew (as did Ramgoolam) that the coalition had already been concluded. When they met in Paris a few weeks later, it was to confirm the decisions already made and not to discuss their implementation. Michel Debre, who had thrown all his weight into the negotiation, was happy. Duval, within a National Union government in an independent Mauritius, was the assurance that France would keep its official and unofficial accesses to the seat of government. The Blue-White-Red Rooster and the Blue Rooster were meant to get along together.

In time of crisis, when his boat leaks from all sides and very serious political observers predict his near political death, Duval musters a kind of desperate energy which, combined with his inborn boldness, produces an explosive mixture enabling him to bail out. After all, has anyone been able to explain how, having found himself at the bottom from 1976 to 1983, Duval was able, within a few years, to make such a strong comeback that he

found himself vice prime minister. He is thus occupying a position to which he had probably never dreamed of acceding, even with half of the Mauritian population behind him. With a handful of deputies, he became the government's number-two man in 1987. If that is not the result of flair, intuition, opportunism, and a certain genius for politics, how can this meteoric rise be explained? A mystery as thick as London's /fog/ [in English].

In the course of his career, he has succeeded in getting all the political observers of the so-called independent newspapers to agree. Since 1969, all the editorialists have been predicting his disappearance in the near future from the political scene. From Andre Masson to Lindsay Riviere, and from Gerard Cateaux to Philippe Forget, all were sure, at some point or other, that the charismatic leader of the sixties was about to join the /"has beens"/ [in English]. They kept on predicting the death of the man who kept on surviving.

While we were witnessing the birth of the Activist Students Club with Paul Berenger and the brothers Jeerooburkhun, Andre Masson left the PMSD, having been emotionally attracted by these young people filled with passion and new ideas. In *Le Mauricien* dated 15 September 1969, he signed a virulent editorial attacking Gaetan Duval, writing: "Last weekend, the PMSD signed its death warrant on the political and social battlefield where it had fought so courageously." At the time, our country was welcoming Princess Alexandra of England and her husband, Angus Ogilvy. Masson, disappointed over seeing his protegee take such a bad turn, wrote: "Still headed by Gaetan Duval, who is getting a potbelly and collaborating openly in a Teddy-Boy style touched up with high-society type political news, the PMSD had only banal official attitudes and remarkably inept thoughts to offer.(...) Today, as mayor of Port Louis, looking almost plump, he stands aloof and keeps quiet. A garland around his neck, he gestures before a small crowd at the Port Louis market. Needless to say, as the mayor, he then finds himself with the procession of bootlickers walking in step with the princess...."

Masson's disappointment was proportionate to the immeasurable hope he had placed in Gaetan Duval, whom he had foreseen as a sort of messiah. He ended his editorial, titled "Trailing the Age That Is," with these few crisp sentences that were to disassociate forever Raoul Rivet's newspaper from the PMSD. Masson wrote: "Within a 2-year period, since the 1967 elections, the PMSD has, in fact, repudiated what it had stood for. Very soon, it will no longer represent anything. A large segment of the population is already mistaking it for those who, from wasting public funds to suffering from professional deafness, use the fleeced taxpayer and the anguish of the poor to profit a little while longer. We have had a narrow escape. The most incompetent bourgeoisie was hiding behind a socialism made up of hollow and empty words. Poor PMSD called on to a vocation

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that it did not understand. Today, it is barely good enough to get spruced up for the first banquet organized and paid by us."

The article cut Duval to the core: he suffered when he read this prose coming from a man whom he had considered a friend, an intimate, a confident and an inspiration. But choosing to put it to rest, he opted instead for the other reality, that of being "misunderstood." For a sensitive man, somewhat ill at ease with himself, the feeling of misunderstanding turns very quickly into a feeling of ingratitude. Duval then championed one of his friend Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's favorite pet subjects: "Ungrateful people! I give you everything and you give me nothing in return!" On 10 November 1970, he introduced a speech to Parliament with a sentence by William Shakespeare, which speaks volumes about his state of mind: "Ingratitude," he hurled in the lyrical tone of a lawyer pleading the

ultimate case, "more strong than a traitor's arm, quite vanquished me!" (in English) Sitting opposite him, Maurice Lesage made fun of him.

Duval came to hate those who had dropped him more than his avowed enemies. The defectors left him with a scar. He did not judge Andre Masson the same way. He had too much respect for the man. In the course of the meetings that led to this book, he told me: "It is Masson who threw me in the arms of Ramgoolam, who was waiting for only one thing: a weakened PMSD that he could control as he saw fit." But his statement did not stop at that. Things are never simple for Duval when friendship is involved. "Who knows? Masson could have been right....," he added. He tried to meet him before his death in 1987, but Masson refused. The final reconciliation did not take place. Former friends make the worse enemies. Duval learned the lesson for himself.

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**Chapter 2: To a Degree, To Leave Is To Return**

In 1981, while he was searching for a new political break and totally isolated from political life, Duval announced a "monster meeting" in front of the Port Louis city hall. During this meeting, eternal scenario, he was going to announce his desire to leave the political scene. To my knowledge, during his political career, Duval announced seven times his retirement from active politics. To avoid making a lie of this historical truth, he is announcing it once again in this book. Duval and his voters live a permanent domestic quarrel played out in this "Commedia-del-Arte" style, which fits him like a glove. They act like the woman who threatens to leave her husband every time that he is unfaithful. But perhaps, this time, Duval is speaking of his retirement without political ulterior motives. Who knows? The future will tell. His Majesty's Lord is 57 years old and the entrance of his son Xavier on the scene reassures some facet of his being. Monarchs leave only after the succession has been ensured.

On the day of the meeting, Sunday 14 June 1981, the weekly Week-End published an editorial that I had authored, titled "To Leave the Table When Success Has Been Cleared Away." I wrote at the time: *"When these few lines appear in print, Sir Gaetan Duval will be before the municipality of Port Louis to talk about his fate. According to his close associates, more than 4,000 people are expected to attend that meeting. A few raised hands, some waving handkerchiefs and people screaming: 'Gaetan don't leave' [in Creole], and the PSMD leader, this amazing man, will feel compelled to stay."*

*"That is how he is and he will never change. All things considered, he meets exactly the standards of all the leaders who have charisma. The nature of the charismatic man is never to acknowledge that his message could be rejected. Unknowing to him, the seeds of what made that man successful in the sixties were at the same time bearing his downfall."*

*"His personality is what enabled him to pass on his message in 1967 and, today, it is still his personality that prevents his message from being well received. Gaetan Duval cannot be changed.(...) (...) I would think that the inner struggle of a man who is feeling the ground give way under him must be grim when he has known the greatest hours of glory. This inner struggle can lead a man to make the most irrational decisions, especially if he is badly advised. Never to have been able to accept advice is one of the characteristics of that man, as of any leader who respects himself."*

*"Whether the meeting is attended this morning by 10,000 people, or even 20,000, will change nothing. Yet he will personally feel comforted. But he must also come to understand, and remember, that this situation is similar to that of a cancer patient on the threshold of death. The illness always gives signs of remission before dealing the fatal blow."*

*"Sir Gaetan Duval has given a "show-business" slant to his life. There are many examples of wisdom in that*

*business. Maurice Chevalier is a case in point. At the height of his fame, he declared: 'You must know how to retire at the proper time to enable those who have loved you to keep a marvelous memory of you.' Charles Aznavour is another example; he said: 'One must know how to leave the table when love has been cleared away.'"*

*"When you live close to nature, there are attitudes towards life which must not escape you. Sir Gaetan knows that."*

The day after the publication of my article, on Monday 15 June 1981, at 0700 hours, I saw Sir Gaetan's driver in the offices of Le Mauricien. He was bearing a note from Duval telling me that my editorial was filled with sadness and that he would like to speak to me.

One hour into our meeting, I understood that, on the previous day, he had reacted angrily when he had read my editorial a few minutes prior to leaving for his meeting. My challenging his political future, however, had not been the cause of his anger; but what had angered him was simply that I had taken the liberty of making personal comments on his views of existence, in another word, I had touched the man in his "inner core." As an ultimate protection against his own self, however, he had preferred to perceive only a feeling of sadness in that editorial, which, according to him, had "saved everything." "Sadness" implying consideration and friendship, he was satisfied. He concluded our meeting with these words: "In any case, I will come back." The prophecy came to pass 2 years later. It is not without good reason that, on the day of my visit, he cited two careers, Pierre Trudeau's and Indira Gandhi's, as examples.

Duval has been hated, and still is. Duval has been adored, and still is. He was never able to inspire lukewarm indifference. You should hear Guy d'Arifat speak about Duval to understand the extent of the loathing that the PSMD leader can inspire. I was asking d'Arifat, one of his most passionate enemies, to describe to me, in a few words, his feelings for the man Duval. His blue eyes filled with disgust, he hurled this sentence my way: "He is a dishonest demagogue. I hate him. I hate him, do you understand?" When I asked him to explain himself with a little more discrimination, he responded: "You cannot be discriminating when speaking about a man without discrimination!"

But there are also those who have a boundless and limitless admiration for the man. Who is not aware that in Mauritius there have been, and still are, humble homes in which Duval's picture is found on living room walls between those of Elizabeth II and of the Sacred Heart! A few months back, people in Mahebourg were mesmerized by Duval, who was making a speech to commemorate his 30 years in politics. In order to be loved, did Duval, the manipulator of crowds, succumb to the smooth poison of seduction, which is the hand-to-hand weapon of his struggle? Succumbed, he undeniably did in the seventies, and he indulged in the luxury of



all sorts of excesses. He explains this at length in this book. But today? Did he assimilate and master the giddiness of seduction? Answering this question is taking a chance. He is deeply contemptuous of those who do not like him. Like Victor Hugo (whom he admires tremendously), he has never been able to understand that he could not be loved. He is so sure of his power of persuasion that he is secretly convinced that he would make friends of his enemies, were he to meet them face to face.

At home, surrounded by absolute thugs, he feels alone, desperately alone. Yet, paradoxically, he needs this flurry of people around him. They undoubtedly are the pedestal on which he stands to view all the others or, simply, himself.

Duval will never disavow this entourage, which is said to be violent, parasitic, and rather pleasure-seeking. Chiefs and their lieutenants develop interdependent ties, the product of a certain chemistry. The Azor Adelaide affair is a case in point. An MMM [Mauritian Militant Movement] supporter, he was assassinated in Curepipe in 1971. Several of Duval's officials ended up in jail. He visited them regularly, even if it meant compromising his career. You do not drop those who love him without being punished. One day in July 1979, answering one of his party's behind-the-scene officials, who was asking him politely to "filter" his entourage, Duval declared curtly: "When you were sitting warmly at home, they were by my side; they took many blows in my place; and they laughed and cried with me. If that is not enough for you, then you lack total understanding!" He gives this answer to anyone willing to listen, for he wants people to understand that, in his circle, minions will always be protected from a possible war among star leaders. But surely, all politicians are in the same boat. Ramgoolam had his reasons for supporting Minister Badry in 1979. Berenger has his reasons for supporting Amedee Darga, yet the latter's role is being strongly contested even within his own party. Politicians have a sense of loyalty and allegiance, which transcends the logic of a simple citizen.

It was during this period of political unrest (1976-1982) that Duval was to try to measure and evaluate his entourage. He quietly performed a purge. There were also those who, inevitable parasites, slipped quietly away, when privileges were no longer possible because the "protector" was outside the halls of executive power. Yet, even today, a certain mystery surrounds Sir Gaetan's intimates. Great moments of friendship prevail, but they cannot allay the feeling that some business intrudes into politics. Newspapers and opponents of the PMSD leader have often alluded, and still are, to a possible link between some of the members of his entourage and drug circles. All of this will probably remain impenetrable and unverifiable. It has been impossible to prove anything one way or the other as of this date. Duval strongly denies all allegations, for he senses that he is the one being targeted through his intimates. His explanations are disarmingly simple or

sincere, depending on what side of the fence one stands. "I do not even allow my people to smoke. How can people believe that I can endorse drugs, the deadliest weapon against youth?...."

Power and its aura seem to be Duval's first and foremost interest. His relationship to power and popularity (or anonymity, this other antipode) is complex. Raoul Rivet declared some 30 years ago: "Duval will be a star or a danger." The man with the lion mane and the often sure and pitiless judgment, missed it by very little. Duval has been a little of both. He undoubtedly became dangerous when he became, or thought he had become, a star, sharing with that heavenly body the desire to shine. According to many, he succeeded. He also shares this view.

Worshiped at the age of 30, he took himself for a messiah, or took on the ways of one (will we ever know?). Some remain convinced that it is the role that he enjoys the most.

December 1976. Returning from Rodrigues in the Twin Otter of Air Mauritius, Gaetan Duval is fingering a pen. He is tense. His bodyguards watch him silently. When the master has a cold, the entourage sneezes. The officials of the Mauritian Social Democratic Party have organized a demonstration in Plaisance to welcome the leader who is returning from Rodrigues a few days prior to the 20 December elections. When the twin-engine reaches the west coast, Duval, deeply engrossed in Valery Giscard d'Estaing's book "French Democracy," stops reading and looks through the window.

The plane is now flying over Mauritius and is only a few kilometers from Plaisance. The descent begins. After a few minutes, a dense crowd appears, congregated on the airport parking lot. Waving blue flags now come into view. Duval smiles, asks for his hairbrush and meticulously takes care of his curls. This done, he changes his shirt and asks one of his bodyguards to help him with his leather ankle boots.

The actor is ready, the spectators are there, the show can begin. The plane has just touched the ground and comes to the end of the runway before returning to the terminal. The bodyguards move back and forth in the narrow central aisle. His arms folded over his chest, the seated Duval waits like an actor waiting for the curtain to rise. Does he even know what he is going to say to these thousands of people? It is not certain. There often are ties more physical than intellectual between him and his electorate, which he molded to his desires. Speaking has often been observed in his meetings to be, at times, nothing more than an accessory.

The doors are not yet opened when a mounting ovation can already be heard. Duval laughs wholeheartedly. So does the entourage. Duval screams: "What are you waiting for to open up the door?" [in Creole] He has barely finished his sentence when the door flies open, letting a mild wind flow into the plane. He springs

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forward, then slows down to descend the gangway majestically and unhurriedly, arms crossed. The public is getting full value for its money. The people are exultant, screaming "Gaetan! Gaetan!" and waving blue flags. Lord Duval savors his happiness to the fullest and allows the crowd, which has grabbed him, to carry him, while his friends unload his luggage from the plane to the Chevrolet Camaro, which has advanced on the landing strip. Someone in his entourage asks if somebody remembered to take the small hot peppers from Rodrigues, which Duval had brought back for a high official of the judiciary branch who is a friend and intimate.

To forget these peppers would be sacrilegious. He does not forget his friends, not him. For them, it is possible to compromise. He is somewhat very proud of that fact.

He has this insolent manner of acting out his life whether he is in the salon of the Elysee, or standing by General de Gaulle, or with Ramdass, the steward who removes his shoes. He will discuss the same topics with his driver Ramjuttun as with Ira de Furstenberg, at "Regine," so anxious is he to explain, through his paradoxical elitism, that if all men are not inwardly equal, they have all interesting things to say.

But one of Duval's sentences sheds a special light on the choices that he has made as a political man. In his book titled *A Certain Idea of Mauritius*, he wrote: "[Mauritius] is where I had my first ambitions, not to be a minister or the head of government, but to be loved and listened to by the crowd, in other words, to become a real 'leader' [in English]. This leading sentence explains the man's behavior in a nutshell, a man who practices politics as he would painting or music. A political career implies an ideal, the sense of a mission to be accomplished, followed, incidentally, by the happiness of being loved. Those are not Duval's priorities. Nothing is possible, or even comes under consideration, if he is not loved, or if he thinks that he is not.

His female dog Nefertiti was sick. Added bad luck, it happened on the day that Parliament had convened. Duval was sitting on the floor of the Chamber next to Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth, listening to the various speakers participating in the debates. After a few minutes, he could no longer contain himself. He called the officer on duty and asked him to call Grand-Gaube

to inquire about his dog. The man came back a few minutes later, leaned toward Duval and gave him news that appeared to sadden him. At that very moment, nothing probably was any longer important to him. The vote on the budget or the MMM position on the withdrawal of Diego Garcia Island from the country were so much rubbish. The world had stopped with Nefertiti's illness. Nefertiti and her master embody to the extreme the full strength of the ties, which exist between man and animal. This dog that cries and pines away when Duval travels; sulks when he returns; cannot tolerate for anyone to approach its master without the latter's knowledge; guards the room when the master sleeps; and plays with a stranger only after its master has shaken his hand; how, do pray tell, how can one leave it alone and sick to attend some meeting of Parliament where, after all, one only decides on the future of the country? To love and be loved, that is the most important thing.

The posters of the Mauritian Social Democratic Party have always amused the Mauritian political class, because they are a mixture of naivete, freshness of approach, and demagoguery. Whereas the MMM covers the town with "The Domineering Alliance" posters showing Minister Ramjuttun in a difficult position, or with some others calling the Jugnauth government the Mafia, Duval runs counter to everyone. One morning in August 1987, Mauritius awoke to see, plastered on the walls, a Gaetan Duval in jogging suit, surrounded by children. The slogan read: "Gaetan, don't let go of our hand" [in Creole]. Another one, bearing the words "I love you" showed the leader in front of a microphone. Form clearly winning over content is part of the Duval style. One thing is certain: he is the only politician who can get away with such impudences without appearing ridiculous, because Duval is Duval. He is so persistent in stating: my name is Gaetan Duval and I am different, that no one is surprised by anything he does. The intellectuals can always laugh. Come election time, they do not make up the majority.

No one will describe with sufficient accuracy what Duval can feel, sunk in the soft seat of his Mercedes or of his new Rolls-Royce; or when he is received with full honor in all the social circles. I always thought that to be received by Pope Jean Paul II or President Reagan without a single photographer present, or supreme insult, without a single of his enemies present, would be the depth of despair for that man.



### Chapter 3: The Stormy Union of Excess and Tolerance

Duval and Ramgoolam were bound to disagree. That is the reason why they get along so well together. Their enormous differences lead to a complicity, paradoxically tinged with distrust, born of their mutual regard and fear. Their complexity had brought them closer together. The right-wing Duval and the left-wing Ramgoolam (at least until 1969) challenged the law of political balance. By persistently destabilizing each other, they were able on three occasions, and within different governments, to work together in some sort of strange harmony that enabled them to find their focus. The whole of Mauritius lived with the Ramgoolam-Duval couple for more than 10 years, becoming used to the eternal shouting matches followed by the inevitable reconciliations. They each have told everything there is to tell on the other. In 1974, SSR [Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam] did not hesitate to call a "vile dictator" the man whom he had called "my boy," arguing that, in the seventies, Duval had led the country on the brink of a dictatorship. As for Duval, with his feeling for words, he wrote: "Ramgoolam distrusts like the plague anything that is not mediocre."

On 19 June 1981, in an editorial titled "The PMSD Between Two Strategies," Lindsay Riviere, speaking about one of the SGD [Sir Gaetan Duval]-SSR unions, wrote: "No matter that Ramgoolam sleeps 350 days out of 365 and that the country complains because of his ultraconservatism, everybody knows that the PMSD chief will more or less end up making the best of it." Further on in that same editorial, Riviere—a surprisingly insightful political analyst of that almost constant political and, I would say, endemic imbroglio—described in a few words the couple's endless conflicts: "Twenty years of friction with the prime minister will have convinced the PMSD leader that SSR, being in control of the current situation, can (and will not abstain from doing so) change substantially the political equations by: letting the PMSD exhaust itself in the opposition; enticing its dissident members; negotiating electoral agreements with other representatives of minorities; or even, go as far as extending a hand to the present opposition in order to wipe out the PMSD (...). Yet, one senses that, meanwhile, the PMSD leader is also toying with another idea: the possible return to the populism of the sixties and of the 1975-1976 era by climbing, on the way, aboard the unemployment bandwagon in order to create a right-wing opposition. It is Duval's "Jamaican card." (...) (...) Between the constraints of his primary "great alliance" strategy and the prospects offered by his second populist opposition strategy, the PMSD leader seems to be actually trying to find a balanced position, that is to say, not to cut off relations entirely, but not tying completely his fate to that of the Labor Party members, whose aberrations succeeded in getting everybody unanimously against them."

Riviere, who was also closely monitoring the relationship of the devilish couple, had grasped in this editorial how inevitable it was for these two men to meet.

When times were difficult, Duval always clung to Ramgoolam. Too skillful a politician not to realize that, come 1968, he had no hope outside the PT, he played his card intelligently opposite the old fox who had found, through him, the means of shielding himself from the blackmail to which he was being subjected within his own party.

Ramgoolam had always regarded Duval as the boisterous son bent on giving him a hard time, but whom he appreciated just the same for some of his qualities. In 1977, during a small reception in the municipality of Curepipe, during one of Duval's many mayoralties, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam shouted to Duval from the end of the room: "Gaetan, did you finish your tea?" [in Creole] He then walked among the guests to hand him a cup. But there were also tense moments. In 1973, in the Trou aux Biches Hotel, the two met in the room of a mutual friend, the actor Sanjay Khan. Ramgoolam, exasperated by the destabilization attempted by Duval, who had recently left the coalition, threatened: "If you keep it up, I will have you thrown in jail." Duval reacted violently: "If you do that, you better watch yourself and your family, too! My men will get you!" The situation could have deteriorated, had it not been for Khan's intervention, who was distressed over the turn of the conversation between the prime minister and his former minister of foreign affairs.

Speaking about Duval, Sir Seewoosagur used to say: "He is a good boy, only he keeps bad company!" [in Creole] The "playboy star" side of his minister of foreign affairs exasperated him a little. When abroad (especially in France), he felt that, although he was the prime minister, more attention was being paid to Duval than to himself. Hence, an almost obsessional distrust of Duval's ties to France. At the time, he probably was right to be wary. Furthermore, his minister's relations with the French extreme right wing was not likely to reassure him. Even though Duval continued to deny it. In 1980, interviewed for the weekly *Week-End* by Michel Dedans on his ties to Jean Marie Le Pen, Duval answered: "I never had, and do not intend to have, relations with the new right or any other French extreme right-wing movement, since I have no contact with those circles. If Mr Alix Morel is thinking about setting up a meeting between Le Pen and myself, he is free to do so; but from there to saying that I agree with his project because he is a friend is to draw too hasty a conclusion."

A few months later, he gave a lavish luncheon for 50 guests at his home in Grand Gaube and received the president of the National Front.

In 1982, there were still contacts between the PMSD and the FN [National Front]. But, all things considered, could it be said that Duval belonged to the extreme right? Nothing is less sure. His ties to the FN must be analyzed in light of the objective data of the time. We were in the eighties and, in France, President Giscard d'Estaing was governing in an lame-duck climate. A certain Francois Mitterrand was heading the polls. We no longer were in Michel Debre's and Jean Francois



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Deniau's France. Duval, no longer in the government and heading only a very weakened party, was having great difficulties maintaining his contacts. This was the background that drove him to contact the extreme right with the help of the Reunionese lawyer Mr Alix Morel, whose association with the National Front was well known. Although Gaetan Duval may have been taken in by Le Pen's braggart and provocative side, it is, nevertheless, difficult to imagine him adopting the FN racist arguments. He is the type of man who could adopt as his own Raoul Rivet's famous reply to one of his friends who had called his driver "dirty nigger": "Turn around, look at me, and be quiet."

In this book, Duval tells how Ramgoolam capsize the negotiations pertaining to the "offer" of the port of Mahebourg to the French authorities. Although Ramgoolam had agreed over the principle, he was to stop all negotiations with the officials of the French Government because of a detail that many would not hesitate to call anecdotal.

Greeting Pierre Messmer in a sumptuous suite in the Georges V Hotel in Paris, a suite reserved by Duval during his stay in the French capital, Prime Minister Ramgoolam told his minister of foreign affairs that he was better housed than he. Our ambassadors knew that Ramgoolam despised large hotel rooms, his tastes in this matter having remained very simple. Immediately after entering the room, he told Duval in an aside: "If I am a king, you are an emperor!" He could not shake the idea that, to indulge in such luxury, Duval was being heavily financed by the French. Duval still maintains that it was not so. But we will never know the truth, since it is more difficult to access the financing sources of political parties than the tombs of old Egypt (although the latter let some light in, whereas the relationships between money and political parties take place in absolute darkness, the party heads and the financiers being the only ones equipped with infrared glasses).

But certain questions about the financing of the PMSD since 1970—when the private Mauritian sector decided to withdraw—remain, nonetheless, unanswered.

If, in the course of his career, Duval has so often hated Ramgoolam, it may be because the latter, experienced in the cat and mouse game, always came out the victor in this type of exercise. Beginning in 1976, SSR practiced a wait-and-see policy, his favorite method of management. He was to pull his party, and the country along with it, toward a could-not-care-less and laissez-faire policy until 1982, thus handing the power on a silver platter to the MMM-PSM [Mauritian Socialist Party] opposition. Opposite Ramgoolam and his intellectually softheaded and corrupted old colonels with their collapsed reflexes, the Mauritian population was discovering a well-knit, homogeneous, and intelligent alliance, filled with faith in the future and speaking seriously. Its methods differed conspicuously from the methods, or rather lack of methods, of a Ramgoolam whose sole concern was to protect his friends.

Sensing the downfall and expecting the cataclysm as early as 1981, Duval did not hesitate to leave his old friend stranded in a canoe without a paddle. He left the Labor Party that Ramgoolam, with fierce determination, was trying to derail.

However, not satisfied with letting his long-time accomplice cheerfully navigate toward the chasm, he was to engage in shameless blackmail (politicians alone are privy to these methods). He forced Ramgoolam to sign a (worthless) document, recognizing him as the "representative of the general population." Ramgoolam, who knew a lot about the art of blackmail, was dumbfounded to see his first assistant blackmailing him.

That was not the last showdown, however. Duval dropped Ramgoolam as soon as he obtained the document making him "representative of the general population." Out of pride, he ran alone in the 1982 elections, and lost, although he had submitted his candidacy in many wards. As for Ramgoolam, he tried and tried again to extricate himself from his allies, such as Francois Eliezer, Philippe Blackburn, and others, who were to go with him to the scaffold with amazing candor.

In view of the downfall of the Labor Party, Duval was to regard his defeat almost as a victory.

It was to be the last great Ramgoolam-Duval contest, but this time there were to be no victors.

Imagining a counter melody on the saxophone in a work of Purcell is difficult to do, as it is difficult to imagine a "modus vivendi" between Sir Gaetan Duval and Paul Berenger. Yet, there is one. With the passing of time, the two leaders have come to view each other with some sort of esteem, behind the latent violence, a regard that neither of them will ever acknowledge. Duval recognizes a born leader in Berenger, who feels the same toward Duval. When, during a meeting, he speaks about the MMM leader, Duval does not show this cynical condescension, which he is particularly fond of using when referring to his peers. His judgment becomes more moderate when applied to Berenger. He finds him intelligent and he deplores with almost a shade of regret his "lack of intuition."

Although Paul Berenger has been, by far, Gaetan Duval's most inveterate enemy, the latter cannot fail to acknowledge the endurance, cunning, and flair of this enemy whom he has sent down for the count several times without ever succeeding in striking the knockout blow.

In 1982, after several decades of fiercely opposing Duval, who embodies what he hates the most politically, Paul Berenger, magnanimous, eagerly backed Gaetan Duval's entry into Parliament as the "best loser" [in English]. By so doing, he held the opposite view to that of the radical wing of his own party, which had even organized a rally to protest Duval's entry into Parliament.

Surprising? Not quite. There is a tacit agreement among politicians, which is often unknown to the voters; it is a kind of mutual recognition. Politicians, like the Masons, acknowledge each other. Examples abound on the international scene. Has anyone forgotten Francois Mitterrand, the die-hard democrat, who approved the censorship of former emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa's book, because the latter mentioned the diamond incident and, by the same token, ran the risk of embarrassing Valery Giscard d'Estaing? Or Edward Heath, the British conservative prime minister who refused to attack Jeremy Thorpe, his opponent in the Liberal Party, who had been implicated in a sex scandal?

The 1983 electoral campaign was planned against Paul Berenger and around the 57 million rupees that he was said to have awarded to his "cousins" in the sugar industry; yet, Gaetan Duval did not use that information against Paul Berenger, not once, leaving it up to the other leaders of the Alliance to do so.

Relations between the two men, that were very tense in the seventies, now seem to have settled into some sort of unsigned, but privately etched, agreements. A few weeks prior to the 1987 parliamentary elections discreet contacts between the PMSD and MMM leaders were set up at the highest level. In total secrecy, Berenger offered Duval [the chance] to become the traveling ambassador of Mauritius to Europe, should the MMM be victorious. The affair made a lot of noise when it was disclosed by the monthly *Le Nouveau Viriginie*. The "independent" press, which is seldom cautious, chose to refer to it in veiled terms. Having become a recipient of party tactics, it undoubtedly failed to grasp the extremely important nature of this course of action which, historically, fits directly into the frantic recentering of the Mauritian political scene. In other words, it revealed in broad daylight the MMM's shift to the right.

Prime minister Anerood Jugnauth challenged Prem Nababsing, the MMM prime minister designate, asking him to confirm or quash the news. A few timid denials, unwillingly expressed, were reported. Paul Berenger

never denied it formally. As for Sir Gaetan Duval, he merely told the journalists: "It would seem that some of your colleagues have an overactive imagination." Nothing more. That is a far cry from 1976, when Duval and Berenger would have been furious had their names been linked. The two men (the elections were just a few weeks away) kept a prudent and embarrassed silence. If important secret meetings occur without the voters' knowledge, they also sometimes occur without one's own lieutenants' knowledge. Prem Nababsing, Allan Ganoo, and a few others know something about that.

What draws the leaders closer, despite their differences, is this secret esteem, born of a common desire to lead men and to control the future.

But, it would be rash to pretend that there is no determinism and ethnic undercurrent in the Duval-Berenger relationship. Seen under its darkest light, the "Joint Socks Front" was linked to an anti-Ramgoolamism not entirely devoid of communal ulterior motives. It is not without good reason that this meeting was "sponsored" by Jean Louis Pages, a French national and mutual friend of Duval and Berenger, a man who cannot be called pro-Indian.

But, as we saw, Duval and Berenger are probably not real "communalists," even if, by strategic choice, they are both capable, without giving it another thought, of jumping with both feet into the communalist bandwagon, reactionary for the one and scientific for the other. But, despite all these esoteric converging factors, it seems almost impossible to imagine a lasting agreement that would be politically implemented. There is an abyss between these two men. Duval is a pleasure-seeker, a reveler, and an epicurien as opposed to an austere, cold (or who gives himself that image), calculating, and severe Paul Berenger. How can all of this be reconciled?

But history is the worse of whores: it beds down together men of different outlooks, tormented by the rut. Let us not be taken in: there is such a thing as political rut. In academic circles, it is called ambition.

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#### Chapter 4: "I Could Have Been a Leftist"

[Question] We are in 1955, you have completed your law studies in London and Paris. Have you already made private plans? Are you aware that you will enter politics as soon as you return to your country?

[Answer] Politics already held a great interest for me. I wrote a lot for *Le Mauricien*, to protest against various treatments suffered by the students. At the time, we had a very leftist, extremist, and activist student union. I, together with a group of friends, was not always in agreement with its position.

[Question] Already not in agreement with the left?

[Answer] Exactly. Not in agreement with the extreme left. Once, for the union election, we brought students from Greater Oxford and Cambridge and we defeated the left-wing union. We took the leadership (of the union). I must confess that I had organized practically all that pertained to the election: posters, slogans, etc. After that, I became the messenger of the labor candidate for the Paddington district. I sealed the envelopes and distributed them. I was never able to explain whether or not conviction had led me to work for the Labor Party. I believe that, at the time, I already knew where I was going. I owed this knowledge to Raoul Rivet who influenced my career tremendously. Even before leaving for England, I had followed with much interest Rivet's election to Rose Hill. I had worked as a supporter in that election in which, I believed, he took sixth place. Jules Koenig was first.

[Question] Looking back, how do you judge Raoul Rivet?

[Answer] You do not judge someone who has been your master and has shown you the way. His role was enormous all along my career, up until his death.

[Question] What were the subjects of the articles you were sending *Le Mauricien* during your student days?

[Answer] At the time, the French language was being threatened in Mauritius. The politicians were making an "issue" of it. I began to fight for that cause. When I returned in 1956, it was very difficult to find a young Creole professional working other than in the administration. As soon as I landed in the country, I was approached by a very influential group within the Creole community. I was pressured by various people, such as Raymond Rivet, Maurice Lesage, and even my brother Herve. I was asked "to try" politics. "We have no one," they told me. Guy Forget sent for me on behalf of the Labor Party. We had a long conversation and he impressed me very little as a politician. He was a literary man, discriminating and subtle, but not a politician. A few weeks later I got into an argument with him. I took him to task for wanting to give up the French language. It was the type of controversy going on at the time: literary and sharp. I shall point out, for example, that Forget wrote "verbal rhetoric" in his article, and the

expression is not used in French. When we later read again these controversies, we realize that they were a true expression of the time in which we lived. Then, the level was different than it is today. We wrote a lot and we fought for ideas. We took up our pen when we had something to say. Today, a politician will organize a press conference for the most irrelevant subject. There were depth and elegance at the time. The men who headed the various parties were undoubtedly worth more than those of today.

[Question] Do you think that the "communal" factor was already well established in the political customs of the time?

[Answer] Absolutely. Had I joined the PT, it would have been for Forget and not for Ramgoolam. We had to live with it in 1956. Indian hegemony and, through it, that of the English language, was very strong. As never before in my career, I found myself in an unstable position. By coming out for the French language, I found myself with people who, under different circumstances, would never have been my natural allies, namely, the big capitalists and their lackeys. I would normally have taken my place within the Labor Party, had it not been for this hegemony of the English language. In any case, I would certainly have begun my career in the left. I do not know where I would have gone from there, but I know that, like all young people, I would have begun in the left. The primary factor, I repeat, was French which, we very easily tend to forget, was being seriously threatened. An entire movement was formed to counteract this threat.

[Question] Do you believe that, had it not been for that movement, French would be dead?

[Answer] Certainly. Had it not been for people like Raoul Rivet and Jules Koenig, French would have been pushed into the background. Backed by the Labor Party members, the English wanted to impose their language at all costs. I will even go further: they wanted to impose it to please the Labor Party members. At the time, the Indian community believed that too many French scholarships could be detrimental to the young people of their community. To be sure, aside from a few exceptions like Seeneevassen, Mootoosamy, Vaghjee, and Beejadhur, they felt more comfortable with English than with French.

[Question] How did you land in the Mauritian Party?

[Answer] Once again, thanks to Raoul Rivet. I would regularly meet with him to talk. We had formed a small discussion group including Rivet himself, Lesage and others.

[Question] How did your first meeting with Jules Koenig go?

[Answer] I understood right away that there was some affinity between us. He was not a politician. He was a man of law whose genius is difficult to imagine. He was a great speaker. Besides that, he had a gift for dissecting



ideas and projects. He did not emotionally arcuse the crowd, but he was convincing. Jules Koenig was the most convincing man that I ever met. To get back to my joining the Mauritian Party, I learned later that it was Raoul Rivet who called Koenig one day to tell him: "There is a very promising young man who came back a short time ago. You must meet him." At the time, Le Mauricien had not pledged its allegiance to any party. In one election, Rivet supported four candidates belonging to different parties. He had a tremendous influence on the country's political life. To a degree, it was to please Rivet that Koenig, wanting to remain in his good grace, received me. It was on the eve of a municipal election. I was working in the research bureau of the Mauritian Party. The party had a lot of money. There were two teams at the Secretariat General, one made up of Miss Rae, Paulo Hein, and myself, and the other made up of Speville and Claude Lamaletie. We were, among other things, preparing programs; studying the other parties' structures; and researching archives. That is how I joined the Mauritian Party. I was going to court to defend cases of voters who had been removed from the roll. There were many. I then began to be known in political circles. I must confess that this work enabled me to survive. We must never forget how important it is for a young person to be able to earn a living before he can discuss great ideas. Had I not worked at that job, I would have been very tempted to make my living in the magistracy and I may never have entered politics. Who knows. I was newly married and I needed security. By attending the municipal elections I had my baptism by fire, my first meeting! It was at Plaine Verte. There were people like Dalais, Razack Mohamed, and Koenig.

[Question] How did that first contact with the crowd go?

[Answer] Catastrophically. I was overcome with stage fright. I was reading long excerpts from newspapers before a crowd who, I believe, was falling asleep. Moreover, at the time, we were meeting at night. It was on that day that Razack Mohamed introduced me as his son.

[Question] Once you took that first step, you must certainly have wondered what you were going to do. I will ask you this question: did you consider a political career without being at the top, that is to say, in command?

[Answer] No. I believe that I was already ambitious. I knew that I would not stop there. This knowledge was to shape my whole career. It was sustained by intimates, like Monaf Fakira, who made sure that I always remained in the limelight.

[Question] Was the leadership of the Mauritian Party already attracting you. [Answer] I would have liked to get it but, at the time, I was not so sure. There were many obstacles. Nothing had been put in writing. There were other pretenders: Raymond Devienne, Guy Rochecouste, and another group that wanted to present an "outsider" [in English] after Koenig's departure. This group could not imagine that someone other than a white

man could head the PSMD. They were Raymond Rivet, Maurice Lesage, and a few others. They could not imagine a Creole at the helm of the party. I even believe that they wanted to replace Koenig with Andre Nairac. I must say that they were all quite sincere and they had nothing against me. They thought that a white man was needed to rally the community, especially the Muslim community. One of their arguments was that electoral lists were always headed by white men. I could never endorse this belief.

[Question] Were you ever able to serve somebody, or are you one of those who must be served?

[Answer] Despite my ambitions, I served Jules Koenig in all honesty. I do not hesitate to say that he was the one who taught me to think. He taught me the approach and the attitude I was to maintain toward my profession as a lawyer, and my life in general. One day, Judge Adrien Latour told me: "I shut my eyes while you were arguing in court and I thought that I was hearing Koenig." What a compliment for me! I inherited from him the harsh and theatrical manner in which I cross-examine witnesses and the way I relate to judges... but always with decorum...

[Question] Did not your entry into the Mauritian Party disturb some of the people who were there before you and could, therefore, expect to climb ahead the leadership ladder.

[Answer] It is interesting to note that Rivet, Lesage, and others were the ones who made me join the Mauritian Party. They were the ones who forced me to stay at a time when I had decided to leave.

[Question] Why had you decided to leave?

[Answer] I had fallen in love with a girl and I wanted to leave everything, my wife, politics...to go live quietly with her. All had been decided, thought through and considered. I was going to leave. Her name was Cecile Casse and I was madly in love with her. I must say that the people who were trying to prevent me from leaving used means bordering on the illegal. I believe that they went to warn the girl's parents. I must again point out certain things which, in my opinion, need to be said. I believe that it never was a question of jealousy on the part of people like Raymond Rivet. When, in the course of my career, Rivet found himself in the opposite camp and acted against me, it was by conviction. The same was true of Maurice Lesage.

[Question] What about Guy Ollivry?

[Answer] It is not the same thing. As far as I am concerned he has never been in the same league as Rivet and Lesage.

[Question] We are now in 1958-1959. Are you comfortable within your party?

[Answer] I have always felt comfortable with people like Rivet and Lesage and, above all, Koenig. The latter, if we

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review history, has never been against the little people. We were defending civil service and the farmers. We took steps that could be qualified as "backward" only from a constitutional standpoint. On a social level, we were a left-wing party.

[Question] Yet, at the time, your party was considered right wing, opposite a Labor Party that was fighting for the people's emancipation and demanding independence?

[Answer] Koenig embodied the Mauritian Party, and no one can ever say that he was a man of the right.

[Question] All the same, you are not going to say that categorizing the Mauritian Party as a right-wing party was an error of history...

[Answer] I must tell you that there is no similarity between the right wing of the past and of today. The right was forced to find basic themes and we had chosen (could we do otherwise?) Indian hegemony and the French language. We were a minority party. From farmers to capitalists, class was not an issue. How can we be categorized as right wing? At the time, Creole intellectuals could be found on the side of labor and on ours. Here is how I found the PM [Mauritian Party]: 100 percent Muslims, whites, and small and middle Creole bourgeois. I took note of the situation and right away became concerned with attracting other communities. I was very dissatisfied with that situation.

[Question] Was it at that time that you pushed your party toward a populism that I would call demagogic?

[Answer] Under my momentum, we became a populist party and we were to realize later that it made the success of our political action.

[Question] Did Jules Koenig agree with this approach?

[Answer] Maybe. In any case, public pressure was so strong that he could do nothing more than follow. With Monaf Fakir, who thought as I did that we would not have any future if our electoral base did not expand, I immediately formed a movement, a /"lobby,"/ [in English] within the party. It just happened that we were on the eve of the universal suffrage.

[Question] Did you ever believe that Koenig had an inkling that you would be his successor?

[Answer] At the time, Koenig and I were so close that I was not thinking about such things. We were together in Parliament where our activities made a lot of noise. We shared an intellectual fellowship, even when, out of deep convictions, I would vote against some of the laws that he endorsed. We had no problem discussing this and we remained intellectually free. Can you imagine this today? Unthinkable. The freedom to think differently. We were lawyers. We pleaded in court together and he slowly began to develop a lot of respect for me. We were the best speakers. I felt that, without saying so, he was secretly hoping that I would some day lead the party. But Koenig

was such a democratic man that he would never have imposed his views on anyone. Even at the end, he always remained discreet, accepting what the majority decided.

[Question] Did you talk about it?

[Answer] Yes. I met Claude Noel one day and we talked about it. I also had my own /"lobby"/ [in English] outside the party, which included people like Claude Noel, Guy Sauzier, and Andre Nairac. Already, Koenig wanted to leave. But some people wanted him to stay. A group of friends and I forced him, or rather encouraged him, to leave, forced being perhaps too strong a word. We were then in 1965.

[Question] Is that what some people were to call your "coup" within the Mauritian Party?

[Answer] I would never have done anything against Koenig. But in that case, the truth had to be faced. Here was a man who had decided to leave of his own free will and some people wanted him to stay, whereas, the party was committed to changing its approach and, most of all, it needed someone with the strength of youth to carry it through successfully.

[Question] If some people did not want Koenig to leave, could it have been primarily because they did not want you to head the party...

[Answer] They thought that Koenig's departure would lead to the PM's disappearance; and that a white man was needed to head the party. Meanwhile, I was beginning to assume some weight in the party. I was elected in Curepipe, where we succeeded in taking back the three districts held by the Labor Party. I became mayor. I imposed my will on the Port Louis municipality. I resigned from the Curepipe mayoralty because people wanted to nominate Gujadhur instead of Appassamy. In other words, I was already /"in the timelight"/ [sic] [in English]. I made known in no uncertain terms my desire to democratize the party. Even though the people wanted Poupard appointed to Port Louis, and even though he was an excellent friend, I wanted Narainen instead. I almost shut down the Port Louis municipality on election day, which had to be postponed. At that precise moment, I certainly was in command of the party, even though I was not officially the leader.

[Question] Had you succeeded in infiltrating the party machine?

[Answer] No. I have never been a man of the party. My methods were different. I had myself accepted in the streets before anything else. The rest followed naturally.

[Question] How did the transfer of power take place?

[Answer] One morning, Koenig sent a letter to the party secretary, Monaf Fakira, asking him to call a meeting and to place the "leader's election" on the agenda. He had reached his decision after a long talk with me. He was sure at the time that my nomination would be approved by the executive committee. He had already



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obtained a consensus. Behind the scene, on the day of my nomination, some people still had reservations. To ease people's minds, we proposed a rough and ready compromise: it was decided that Gaetan Duval would be nominated leader, but Koenig would theoretically keep the command until the elections. I must say that once the decision was taken, no one in the group that did not want me as a leader was ever disloyal to me. Never. And this, up to the 1967 election. We were an extraordinary working team.

[Question] Was the party "yours" from that moment on?

[Answer] I took everything, absolutely everything, in hand. I refused to appoint a treasurer. I wanted to be in charge of everything, for a person who does not control the money does not hold the power. Many thought: "Gaetan is the leader, but we will be able to corner him through economic power." I took the opposite view to everyone else's. I wrote to the newspapers to say: "If you want to help the Mauritian Party, send checks made out to me. I control the money, and everything is now in my hands." Many attempts were made to take this power out of my hands. They never succeeded.

[Question] We are moving toward the 1967 elections and big business is showing much interest. Are you conscious of having been, at some periods in your career, a prisoner of the capitalists?

[Answer] I never have been. At no time. In our program, we never took into account some of the white capitalists' reservations. I explained to them once and for all that you could not send someone to war and then his tie his hands behind his back. They finally came to understand that they had to "get off my back," to enable me to win the 1967 elections.

[Question] There certainly must have been a price to pay when you asked the capitalists to let you work. Is a young Creole allowed to reach for power without obtaining some guarantees in exchange?

[Answer] They did it because they could not do otherwise. We were in the middle of a crisis. They were in somewhat of a panic. As for me, I believe that I have always been a man of crisis. They abdicated before this situation. All of them! The fearful, the weak, and the undecided, they looked for the savior, the man of the masses. No one protested. Everybody went to work with a leader. Everything was straightforward, clear-cut! This situation remained the same up to the 1967 elections, except for a few crises here and there. Everything was scrutinized once again at the time of the negotiations with Ramgoolam for the great coalition of 1969.

[Question] It was then that the "The Creole King" slogan began to appear. You had said that you aspired to a national destiny; was not that a blunder on your part, or had some things already begun to go to your head?

[Answer] What if I were to tell you that I had not instigated that slogan? No one knows who did.

[Question] You may not have been the one who started it, but you, nonetheless, used it to excess...

[Answer] I must say that I was very happy when I heard this slogan being shouted for the first time. There is a proverb that states: /"Creole is king"/ [in Creole]. They had decided for the first time to have a "king." What this title strongly conveyed to me was that I had succeeded in achieving the unity of the Creole community of that period. We were taking back from the members of the Labor Party, the last votes brought to them by Guy Rozemont. We were nibbling these votes slowly but surely, until we reached the grand finale of 44 percent in 1967. No one could have done better. Had Razack Mohamed remained, the PSMD would have blithely won control. I was still aspiring to a national destiny at the time. That was the reason for subsequently forming the "National Party." Meanwhile, prior to these 1967 elections, we completely changed the way to conduct politics in Mauritius. We played havoc with all the methods and basic principles. We introduced American-type campaigning with posters, motorcades, and all sorts of gimmicks. Politics lost this somewhat severe angle reserved to men only. We began to see mature and young women attend public meetings and demonstrate in the streets. Rallies attended by some 100,000 or more people were seen for the first time in Mauritius. Supporters began to all dress the same way. We recognized each other. There was what was called the "Rooster Uniform": the simple white shirt with shoulderstraps. The word "Resolute" began to appear.

[Question] When you threw yourself in the campaign against independence, were you conscious in your heart of hearts that this independence was inescapable and you were fighting a lost cause?

[Answer] In any case, I sensed that we would be beaten...but I also knew that, to maintain unity and get the people to accept the results, they had to be made to believe that they could win. I do not think that I believed for one moment that we were going to win these elections. Maybe for a few seconds, during a few public meetings in which 100,000 to 150,000 people would come to listen to us in a kind of collective trance... My great contribution has been that, in order for these minorities to maintain their unity, I gathered them all and made them believe up to the end that they were going to win. It was mathematically impossible to win. All the Indians, as well as some Muslims, favored the PT. We sent Koenig to Phoenix with the hope that he would succeed in winning back the Muslim voters of that district, which would have enabled us to gain control.

[Question] Is it forbidden to think that you sent Koenig "to the slaughter" to enable those who felt remorseful about his departure as head of the party to "settle" the issue in their mind once and for all?

[Answer] No. Never. I could never have done such a thing to the one person who had taught me practically everything. Let us not forget that we all put ourselves on



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the line for this election. I personally left the Curepipe district for the No 1 district, i.e., Port Louis/Grande Riviere Northwest. No one knew whether or not it would be favorable to the PMSD. I found myself facing a formidable deputy in the person of Michael Leal.

[Question] You were sure that you were going to lose the election. How did you succeed in convincing the voters of something in which you, yourself, did not believe? Does it not require a certain amount of cynicism?

[Answer] No. When you have set a course of action and told yourself "I must achieve the best possible score," you cannot do otherwise but to continue. We made "no errors" in these elections. We had everything: money, organization, good slogans and good candidates... We lost, we lost... I remember Razack Mohamed telling me: "I joined Ramgoolam because I was sure you were going to lose these elections."

[Question] Let us imagine that the PMSD had won these elections. How were you going to proceed? Were not you compelled, in any case, to lead the country to independence?

[Answer] We would have moved toward independence at a not too distant future—there was no other solution—after entering the Common Market through Great Britain, because we did not know at the time that we could negotiate the two issues separately. The idea was to achieve total autonomy, except in foreign affairs; to enter the Common Market; to take advantage of all the guarantees; to negotiate emigration movements; and, following that, to move toward independence. But I was personally ready not to move toward independence had the English said: "Independence will not give you all of these things." For me, everything would have depended on the negotiations. I had thoroughly studied the situation with experts. I wanted to know how we could negotiate our entry into the Common Market and then our exit. It was being said at the time that it was impossible to leave the Common Market once in it.

[Question] Do you believe that Sir Seewoosagur negotiated the independence badly?

[Answer] I have always believed that Ramgoolam did not obtain the maximum of guarantees from the English before leading the country to independence. Furthermore, he said so himself during a private talk, 6 months after the independence: "Had you been with me, we would never have suffered this from the English. I had to accept things that I would never have accepted had you been with me for the discussions." Had we been together, I know that he would not have accepted all the things that involved Diego Garcia Island and, above all, some of the restrictive provisions pertaining to our constitution, the state of emergency in particular, which took away some of his authority.

[Question] Did you meet with Ramgoolam during the 1967 electoral campaign?

[Answer] We met very often, very discreetly. For a few weeks, while the campaign was in full swing, we even negotiated a possible electoral alliance between the Labor Party and the Mauritian Social Democratic Party. We wanted to join forces, but Ramgoolam first wanted me to accept independence according to his own terms. I was not ready to do so. It is easy to say today "Duval was against independence; he is an antipatriot." We were sincere. I was very concerned by the Common Market issue. Mauritius was in a catastrophic economic situation: we had swarms of unemployed. I would see 400 to 500 young people a day, asking me to find them work. I took to the road with them and I was "picked up" by the police for having joined their demonstration about their fear for the future. As for me, I could not see Mauritius getting out of this abyss without help. Furthermore, the future proved me right.

[Question] The Labor Party would hint during meetings that your party was being financed by certain western countries. You had such resources at your disposal for the campaign, that, today still, the question can arise...

[Answer] We did not receive a single penny from a foreign country. We had found plenty right here. On the other hand, we did receive very valuable advice from members of the English Conservative Party. They came to explain to the big capitalists that it was to their interest to finance the party. Despite all that, I never was able to convince the capitalists to finance a newspaper. That is sad...

[Question] Why this reservation according to you?

[Answer] They were willing to finance a campaign, not a newspaper. As for me, at the time, I was ready to give up my profession to head the editorial staff of a newspaper. That would have been a way to ensure the party's total freedom. They may have been afraid that I would escape them totally, because no one could have controlled my pen.

[Question] Did you sense the party financiers' fear of seeing you "escape" their influence totally?

[Answer] I always felt a certain distrust on their part. They would always try to restrain me one way or another. But the tragedy for them was that I was the strongest. I would wait for period of calm—times when they would all lose control—to do what I wanted to do, whereas they would give up. I threatened to resign more than once. That happened in particular when I wanted to form the "National Party."

[Question] Between 1967 and 1968, did you try to do something to stop independence from becoming a reality?

[Answer] Never. Yet I must confess that I was invited to do so.

[Question] By whom?

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[Answer] By a group around Gaetan de Chazal, who wanted to instigate brawls to force the English to delay the independence process. I always refused to participate. If I ordered the PMSD supporters to stay away from the independence day festivities at the Champ de Mars, it was not by antipatriotism, as some thought, but because I was afraid some "fanatics" in our own camp would take advantage of the occasion to start brawls. At the time, tensions ran very high...

[Question] Did not the Surath affair nearly destabilize the country? [Answer] Certainly. I am in a good position to talk about it since I personally witnessed Surath's death. He was standing outside a shop, insulting PMSD supporters who were in a motorcade with me. Nothing too disturbing. I believe that he was slightly drunk. One of our supporters got off the car to go hit him, I believe. Seeing him advancing toward him, Surath grabbed a shovel lying at his feet. Everything happened so fast, the person who had gotten off the car also took fright, grabbed the shovel and struck a blow. He then returned to the car and the demonstration continued. Only later did I learn of poor Surath's death. Ramgoolam made the most of that unfortunate affair, which in no way was part of a plot. That poor man had lost his life and I was very unhappy about it. Politically, it caused us much harm. At the time, the National Party had already been created and the "Indian, My Brother" slogan was beginning to be understood by the Indian community. Surath's death was the pretext for Ramgoolam to invent stupidities such as "We don't want malbar [term of abuse based on communalism]." [in Creole]. This slogan never existed and there never was this type of thinking in my party when I was at the helm. In my national party, all the people took my lead. Furthermore, at the time of Surath's death, it was an Indian, Dharma Rajen, who was president of the party. To get back to the independence festivities, I decided to ask for a "boycott" in order to avoid brawls, and this, after consulting with then governor Sir John Shaw Rennie, who totally agreed with my views on the subject.

[Question] How did you spend 12 March 1968 and in what frame of mind?

[Answer] I was at home, in Poste Lafayette, with a few close friends. I remember a lunch for which I had prepared a chicken curry and faratas, which we ate while drinking champagne... A way of conciliating East and West... But I was in a strange mood. I was afraid for the future, for the racial clashes had been going on for only a few weeks. But in my heart of hearts, I really wanted Ramgoolam to succeed for the sake of this country that I love so much.

[Question] Some thought they saw the hands of the politicians, and, therefore, yours, in the launching of the racial brawls.

[Answer] Everything began with a showdown among the Port Louis pimps. It then deteriorated very quickly. No doubt, the seed of communal violence must have been

present. Otherwise, how could a simple brawl have deteriorated to such an extent? I am still unable to understand how a brawl could have erupted between Muslims and Creoles, two communities that stood side by side for the elections within a same party. I could have understood if the riots had involved the Indians and Creoles, two communities that had found themselves in opposite camps for an electoral campaign which, I must admit, had been difficult. But in this case... How can it be explained? But I will say one thing: search for the beneficiary of the crime. It could only benefit the Labor Party. We were not going to stage brawls among our own supporters... Only another party would do so.

[Question] Would you go as far as saying that the whole thing was organized by the Labor Party?

[Answer] I do not think so. Yet, I believe that some of that party's members must have thrown oil on the fire. I am thinking about the extremists of the Labor Party of that period...

[Question] How do you explain that these brawls, which started suddenly, ended in the same way. Was it solely due to the presence of the army?

[Answer] Much effort was expended. Oozeerally and I, as lawyers, refused to take sides. He was defending Creoles and I, Muslims. We wanted the supporters and the head of the party to understand explicitly that, for us, it could not be any other way. I was in the field. I spent my nights walking the streets. I went looking for the Muslims who were locked up in the shops.

[Question] Do you think that, at some point, Ramgoolam served as a peacemaker?

[Answer] I cannot say that such was the case. To be sure, we all made televised appeals, but nothing of what we did was serious and it had no effect. Insecurity is often the cause of riots. The army presence brought security and contributed to bringing back peace. There also were other people who were extraordinary. I am thinking of Dr Cader Raman, who was a marvelous peacemaker.

[Question] A few months after this unrest, you began negotiating with Ramgoolam; it continues to be known as the "1969 Coalition." In a large meeting held at Place du Quai, you said "no" to the coalition and, a few days later, you did the opposite. What happened between these two events?

[Answer] Firstly, one fact needs to be corrected. I never said "No to the coalition," as you assert. Events occurred as follows: one group in the party, encouraged by Andre Masson through Le Mauricien, did not want the coalition. Those members wanted to add all sorts of provisions. We met in the Port Louis municipality just before the meeting. I was trying for the last time to convince them of the need for a coalition with Ramgoolam. I had called this meeting to force the hands of those who were reticent. It was a way of cornering them. As usual, I thought: "If they, themselves, do not want the coalition,

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the people, for one, will make them understand that they do want it." I was sure of my hold on the people. But I had not counted on Lesage, Rivet, and Panchoo, who had scheduled busloads of supporters to shout "No" to the coalition during the meeting. They had posters. As for me, I had not prepared procoalition posters. I had told the executive, which I had no success convincing unanimously: "I warn you, I, for one, will sense the crowd. I will approve the coalition if the people want it. What you, yourselves, will think is of little importance." When I arrived at the meeting, I saw a huge crowd screaming "yes" to the coalition. When I climbed on the stage, I noticed in a corner to my right, a little over 100 supporters holding up their posters and shouting "no." At that point, I hesitated and I reversed my position. I said "no," not to the coalition itself, but to the conditions of the agreement. For at the time, no one, beginning with Paul Berenger and Andre Masson themselves, was against the principle. The obstacle remained the conditions. Maybe Masson was right on some points. In my opinion, the Mauritian Party had no other choice. Like I have no other choice today but to go with Jugnauth, because I am not a dreamer. Theoretically, the party held 44 percent of the votes and could hope for 50 to 51 percent, later, when there would be a sufficient number of Indians dissatisfied with Ramgoolam. But there were two other factors. The racial brawls had torn apart our own electorate. Augustin Moignac for his part was making the PMSD lose its rank-and-file electorate in the blue-collar housing developments. His departure took away my support and my "Creole King" title... The third factor was the massive emigration. There, too, we had lost our voters. Objectively, there was no chance of winning new elections had they been organized. Forty-four percent remained only in some people's dreams.

[Question] When you went to the meeting, had you already said yes to Ramgoolam for the coalition principle?

[Answer] I had told him that I agreed, but that I needed to submit the case to the party executive. In short, Ramgoolam got exactly what he wanted. He saw the arrival of a PSMD torn apart, and therefore weaker, and therefore more in his power. Masson, Rivet, and Lesage never understood that they had played into Ramgoolam's hands and that they were the ones who had thrown me into his arms. After the meeting, I promised the people that I would consult them before accepting the coalition, but I never did...

[Question] Were you sensing that you were losing your grip on the crowds?...

[Answer] I cheated. I believe that I was afraid of the results. I could no longer hope of being able to convince the crowds. With Le Mauricien against me, it was getting increasingly more difficult. I organized a meeting in

Curepipe, calling for a vote on the coalition and we walked toward Mrs Lydie Rivet's house, chanting pro-coalition slogans. I even remember that I was magnificently dressed. I was handsome. I was able to convince the crowd through a contact akin to some sort of sexual experience with it.

[Question] Has it ever been different?

[Answer] No. I have always had this kind of sensual, almost sexual, relationship with crowds. Each person has his own style, his way of doing things. When you are before a crowd that identifies with you and cannot refrain from repeating what you are saying...

[Question] A politician's greatest happiness?

[Answer] The greatest happiness of a man, pure and simple. There is an extraordinary enjoyment in talking with people who love you, in feeling this hypnotic power that you have on them, and when they cheer you... Had it not been for this relationship with the crowd, there are some things for which I could never have gotten approval. Do you know what it took to get young Creoles to accept the "Indian, My Brother" slogan? People who were raised with a morbid fear of Indians... To get them to accept Krishna Ramjugon as a candidate in Curepipe and Sham Panchoo in Beau Bassin. The latter was to join the Labor Party after the coalition!

[Question] Did you ever regret having been against independence?

[Answer] No. I maintain that had it not been for that coalition and the measures that I instituted concerning Europe and the West, we would be a hapless country.

[Question] Was Michel Debre's role important in the conclusion of this agreement between Ramgoolam and yourself?

[Answer] More important for Ramgoolam than for myself. They were very good friends. Ramgoolam was wise enough to understand the role that France could play in our economic development. He feared a possible boycott by France. It was the West's security. He must also have thought about what would happen if he opposed the coalition. Who knows what France would have done had I continued to be restless within the opposition? Were they ready to help me?

[Question] Had that option been considered at some point?

[Answer] Not to my knowledge.

[Question] Did you meet with Ramgoolam and Debre at the same time?

[Answer] Yes. A few times. Michel Debre had come especially to make this coalition a reality. At the time,



France had already seen far into the future. Let us not forget that Debre was already the deputy from the Reunion. It was France's way to protect its interests in the Indian Ocean. I think that Debre felt that my presence within the coalition would prevent the temptation of shifting to the East.

[Question] In your opinion, had Ramgoolam considered this possibility?

[Answer] No. I do not think so. These impulses had already disappeared. To be sure, maybe he dreamed about it. When Berenger arrived on the scene with his leftist discourse, I felt Ramgoolam turn very nostalgic, but he had been responsible for business far too long under the English not to still dream. In that context, the English carried out a successful independence. Ramgoolam had become a pragmatic.

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### Chapter 5: "I Told Ignace Balloo: You Can Shoot..."

[Question] Once the coalition was achieved, you entered the government to head the Mauritian diplomacy. From then on, you traveled the world over and began to assert your international reputation. Concurrently with your political duties, you missed no opportunity to associate with the stars. We could wonder if, for you, it was not the realization of a child's dream...

[Answer] Yes. These moments brought me the greatest pleasures. They certainly were greater than the political successes. I have always felt a fellowship with artists. We were in tune. I must have the soul of an artist somewhere within me. Politically, I have always felt intellectual affinities with Michel Debre, Roger Peyrefitte, Jean Francois Deniau...

[Question] Did not this life spent with the stars go to your head once?

[Answer] As I look back, I do think that it sometimes went to my head. Probably. Now, everything is back into place. I am older and no longer view things in the same light. New sensations are often intoxicating. But I got out of it. Today, when I meet Johnny Hallyday or Stephanie of Monaco in a restaurant, I am just meeting friends like any other friends; I do not even look to see if people are looking at us! To get back to serious things, I would tell you that, beyond the anecdotes that it elicits, this aspect of my life is very important to me. A claustrophobic factor is always present when you live on a small island in the middle of the Ocean Indian. To leave the country is a must. To get out of the country is to get out of yourself in order to feel comfortable. You must leave the Mauritian midst from time to time. The mind must take off for other skies. I always get much pleasure when I see my name in the foreign press. Yet, when I am mentioned in the Mauritian press I do not even bother to read the article. When I am mentioned in the foreign press, it makes me different from the other Mauritian politicians.

[Question] Is it important to be different?

[Answer] Yes. I like for people to know what the real Gaetan Duval is like. That is more important. My friends could not care less whether I am a vice prime minister or a shoemaker. That is the value of these relationships. I receive an invitation whenever Regine opens a club anywhere in the world. That is gratuitous; it is friendship.

[Question] It has also been said that you had your formal and informal accesses to the Jewish community in Paris...

[Answer] At the time of the Six-Day War, I was minister of foreign affairs, but I willingly became honorary chairman of a committee to collect money for Israel, for the country was experiencing many difficulties. We had organized a benefit at Regine's to collect money. The Jews have a good memory. They never forgot it. In another case, the ambassador of Israel to Antananarivo,

who had jurisdiction in Mauritius, had been expelled from Madagascar. He had come to Mauritius with his wife who was about to give birth. One day, he came to my office to say good-bye, mentioning that Ramgoolam had asked him to leave Mauritius as quickly as possible. He told me that his wife was 6-month's pregnant... I went to see Ramgoolam. A rather heated discussion ensued, in the course of which I even threatened to resign. I won my case and I returned to my office to inform the ambassador that there had been "a slight misunderstanding" and that everything "was settled." Today, Mauritius' interests prevent us from having too close relations with Israel. But I still have many friends there...

[Question] Are you basically pro-Israeli?

[Answer] I feel toward the Jewish people what one can feel about the weakest. I admire their courage and their intelligence. Since, however, Mauritius' interests now guides my conscience, I must take into consideration the opinion of Arab and African countries. I do not wish for closer ties with Israel...

[Question] It is also at about that time that you began to surround yourself with people whose behavior was to give you the reputation of being violent...

[Answer] We are not the ones who introduced the "bodyguards" to Mauritius. Facts must be set right. When I returned to Mauritius, I remember that there was an epoch when Guy d'Arifat, for example, could not have a meeting without "cadgers," accompanied by Raymond Rault, being present to create havoc. The Labor Party had more muscle and we were forced to accept humiliating terms in order to have meetings. It had to stop. That is when people like Ignace Balloo and others appeared around me; when this new electoral clientele started coming from the PT. Furthermore, I am a lawyer and I had occasions of defending many of these people. Their gratitude toward me is great... Even outside the party. They were devoted. There had been people like Bebe or Haroon Wahesrally...

[Question] What do these men mean to you?

[Answer] They saved my life on several occasions... I remember once in 1971... I was mayor of Port Louis, all the officials were at Triolet for a meeting prior to the by-election in which Dev Virahsawmy was to be elected. I had remained at city hall, alone with Bebe and Haroon. Suddenly, an MMM motorcade entered the courtyard; they did not know I was there. Haroon and Bebe came out holding sticks. I personally saw Berenger get out of the car holding a blackjack and Fareed Muttur, a revolver. Haroon jumped Muttur to take his weapon away. The revolver fell. Bebe dropped to the ground and picked it up. All these people then fled. Berenger was arrested a short while later. It was later said that it was Poupard's revolver. But that was a complete lie! It was one of the worse moments of my career.

[Question] Are these people important to your personal equilibrium?

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[Answer] Not at all. I simply am a loyal man. We certainly needed these people at one time. Many were thugs, but they were a needed protection for me. They are now growing old and we have not "renewed" the guard... There is no longer a need for it. But I can understand that people could associate me with the violence.

[Question] Are you a violent man?

[Answer] No. I get angry like everyone else, no more, no less. Even though these people went and performed their "bad deeds" (sometimes on my request), I was never constantly with them.

[Question] Did you get immediately interested in the case of that young member of the Militant Students Club, who was beginning to be mentioned.

[Answer] Not at all. I sincerely thought that it was a passing affair. I remember talking to Monaf Fakira during a horse race. I had asked him: "Whom are those people representing, who are in a constant state of unrest? Do they represent anything?" "At the most 100 people or so," Monaf had answered. Ramgoolam and I had totally underestimated the Berenger phenomenon. We were undergoing full economic development and we thought that it would play in our favor. Incidentally, a little like today...

[Question] Did you not think that the changing of the guard had arrived?

[Answer] Never. Not for a minute. Later, much later, yes... I thought that these people who were spreading havoc belonged to a communist movement; and that what they wanted was direct democracy. I did not think Mauritians were going to be taken in by this kind of thing. I told myself: "Here are young people who have no understanding of Mauritius."

[Question] Did not the future bring home to you that maybe you were the one who had no understanding?

[Answer] No. I believe that Berenger had no understanding of Mauritius. He was content with repeating what had been said on the Paris barricades. But he later adjusted his aim. In fact, it was not Berenger's discourse that was impressive. He had entered a political vacuum; there were people dissatisfied with the coalition; and a fever was coming from Europe. Then, new factors came into play: they were young; they were on familiar terms with each other; they spoke about equality; and they had forgotten about races. They experienced a period of infatuation. Then Berenger switched camp. He forgot about direct democracy and became the greatest democrat of them all. The one with whom we are familiar today. He realized that the Mauritian people were not going to accept the stupidity of direct democracy. In the course of the Triolet elections, Ramgoolam and I began to understand that we were involved with something more important than an outburst of temper. That is when Le Mauricien, under Jacques Rivet, starting being

pro-MMM. I was at Ramgoolam's home on the eve of the by-elections and I told him: "These people are violent, let us not have elections, this could cause much unrest in the country." Sir Harold Walter and Paulo Hein (who was attorney general at the time) settled in Ramgoolam's dining room and began drafting an order for the postponement of the elections, to be signed by the governor general prior to being made public. Berenger was in jail. I had sensed that we were going to lose. In our own meetings, our officials were pro-MMM. I feared that Berenger would take advantage of this by-election to seize power without elections, under cover of some sort of popular uprising, an insurrection movement that would use this election as a lever. I also knew that our police force was not large enough to confront such an insurrection. That is why I told Ramgoolam: "Let us postpone the elections and organize our police so that we can at least defend ourselves."

[Question] Did Ramgoolam agree?

[Answer] Totally. Boolell came in at that moment. He was returning from a meeting and he told us: "You are going to do a stupid thing. I am telling you personally that the MMM is going to lose disastrously. They will not have a single official." I told Boolell: "If you listen to me, the worse that can happen is that we will win the elections and people will say 'Gaetan was wrong,' but if the opposite occurs, nothing further can be done by anyone..." Fulena, whom I had taken aside, confirmed to me that we were going to lose the elections. He did not dare mention anything before Ramgoolam, for the latter could not stand to hear bad news. He would get angry. When the MMM achieved its great victory, the demonstrators marched on Port Louis. I stationed soldiers with machineguns in front of city hall. We were so scared. Berenger had just been released. Jacques Ribet had negotiated with him: "We are releasing you, but you give us your word that you will not participate in the demonstration." That was the compromise struck between the chief of police and Berenger. The latter accepted. He, therefore, was not in the crowd that marched on Port Louis. Through the police, I ordered the crowd not to march in front of city hall. To my great surprise, the crowd heeded my warning. No one can predict how it would have ended had the people refused. We held an extraordinary council of ministers the next day. Jagatsingh did not attend. He sent a written note stating: "It would be better, for security reasons, if the ministers and the prime minister were not all in the same room, for fear of an attack." That gives you an idea of how scared we were. It also gives you an indication of how close Berenger came to seizing power. Had he simply come to Ramgoolam to ask for it, he would have gotten it.

[Question] Were you personally ready to give it to him?

[Answer] Absolutely not. But I was the only one, and it would have been totally useless. After the Council of Ministers, the chief of police informed us that we could not count on the army. It was too small and the men were on the job 24 hours a day. We learned on that same day

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that hundreds of weapons were circulating in Plaine Verte. We could no longer wait. The insurrection could erupt at any moment. Ramgoolam and I asked all the ambassadors for military assistance. They all refused. We insisted and the English made the first move. "If you mention that you fear new racial clashes, you may have a chance. I will then be able to ask my country to do something..." Together, we drafted the telegram for the minister of foreign affairs. The MMM then announced a large meeting for the following Sunday. I had feared that hour. I sent all my officials to the Reunion. Ramgoolam and I went to England and we waited there to see what would happen. We lived intense and dramatic moments. Then this meeting, which had been so feared, took place. To our great surprise, it was a complete flop! [in English] Berenger is always like that. He will always need 25 cents to make a dollar... He had not known how to capitalize on an event that could have given him direct access to power. He should have called a meeting for that very afternoon and seized power. Ramgoolam and I took heart and we came back to Mauritius. That is when the strikes began. They were to succeed one another during many weeks. On one occasion, Paul Berenger came to see Ramgoolam to tell him: "If the general strike is a success, I take your place..."

[Question] Did you attend that meeting?

[Answer] No. But Ramgoolam told me about it a few minutes after Berenger's departure. The latter also told him: "If this strike is not successful, I am the one who will be finished." Ramgoolam could do nothing more than to accept. That is when we noticed that Harold Walter had become more MMM than the MMM supporters themselves. He has always liked to follow the pack. Incidentally, so did Guy Ollivry. One thing saved us from the strikes. I had a very good rapport with Juggernaut. In fact, he was taking his orders from me. He felt that the others lacked "balls." Three, four times a day, he would check with me to see what needed to be done. To enable me to get in touch with him more easily, I decided to stay in the Port Louis municipality. The big strikes were supposed to begin the next day. I am the one who had given the order to beat up the people who had occupied the United Bus Service garage. So, the next day I found myself in the Port Louis municipality and I went to the city hall courtyard. I went to see the workers, who were supposed to go on strike, check in. I told them. "Those of you who want to work, come in, you will be protected." A few came in. More than half refused to work. I saw that it was on their own accord, they were not being intimidated. At noon, I was told that even those who had come in to work wanted to leave. I asked them to remain in the stadium and not to leave. I called a meeting of the municipal council that reached a unanimous decision: "Let us fire all those who did not come in to work." I issued a warning to the workers, stating that I was giving them a 24-hour respite and that all those who were not back at work the next day would be fired. Twenty-four hours later, therefore, I had the people throughout Port Louis contacted and they were

asked to come to the municipality if they wanted to retain their jobs. Enough people were brought in, and that is how we started working again.

[Question] Were you determined to follow through to the end?

[Answer] Absolutely. I continued my course of action by calling the companies that were on strike. Two winemakers, Oxenham and Lai Wan Chut, suffered particularly from the strike. I asked them to do as I had done, namely, to lay off all those who had not shown up for work... They did so a few days later. Meanwhile, negotiations were proceeding with Berenger, Ramgoolam, and Walter. Sometimes, the Council of Ministers would meet as often as four times a day. Decisions were made and changed at the next meeting, and so on. At a meeting held in Ramgoolam's office, Walter informed us that, according to information he had received, the postmen were going to go on strike. As for the dockers, they had begun to refuse to unload goods. Walter told Ramgoolam: "We must give up." As for Berenger, he was backing off to jump better: he was not asking for anything. He simply wanted us to revoke the POA [Public Order Act], which I had submitted for a vote in full council while no one was expecting it. I knew my "standing orders" [in English] well and that is how I came to call for a vote on a law that was not on the agenda. Lesage and the others left the room at that point. I was asking in that law that the docks sector be ruled an "essential service", in order to prevent the strikes. Walter and Rima negotiated with Berenger. The latter asked that all dismissed workers be rehired. As mayor of Port Louis, I refused to yield. I told Ramgoolam that, in my opinion, the strike was about to end, we, therefore, did not have to yield. A few days later, we found ourselves in Ramgoolam's office, waiting for Berenger's decision. He was meeting with some other people in a building located at Quatre Bornes. We were informed that Berenger wanted us, at all costs, to rehire all the workers. Ramgoolam began to shift toward my point of view. He told Berenger "no." A few days later, work resumed gradually in all sectors and the strike was broken. It is then that I saw one of the most distressing sights of my life: the dockers, usually so proud, were being treated like animals, parked here and there, while someone decided who was going to be rehired. Moreover, the employers were taking advantage of the situation and humiliating them. It was an opportunity for backward bosses to resurface. I even had to intervene, for they were going too far. It was at about that time that Ramgoolam decided to act against Berenger. What if I were to tell you that I never was consulted about the measures that he had decided to take...

[Question] The beginning of the repressive measures?

[Answer] He was minister of the interior and he was refusing to explain the nature of the information he was receiving. He would simply say: "I have my information, we must act." We then saw measures against the press...

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[Question] Had you not been told that the press was going to be censored?

[Answer] Yes I had. But I had not been told about Berenger's arrest and his jailing. It must be admitted for history's sake that Ramgoolam agreed with the censorship of the press. Incidentally, all the ministers did too...

[Question] You decided to impose censorship, you, a staunch democrat, why?

[Answer] In many cases, the press was being purely and simply seditious. After a while, we set up a committee to follow the situation and we slowly began to release the people who had been imprisoned. Ramgoolam was deadly afraid of Berenger. It is like a man who is afraid of a dog; he is the first one to want to lock it up and he does not want to release it, for he is afraid of the animal. I personally was not afraid of Berenger. I wanted him released.

[Question] What do you think about the relationship between Ramgoolam and Berenger, since you had been in contact with both of them for many years?

[Answer] At first, Ramgoolam was amused by Berenger. To a degree, this young leftist reminded him of himself. He would even have liked to be in his shoes, but he gradually began mistrusting him. Let us return to the question of the prisoners' release, I fully agreed. But one day, as I was going to the Beau Bassin prison, I learned that there had been some sort of small insurrection. I was even insulted by Paul Berenger's wife. I then began to understand Ramgoolam's caution. That day, I took a plane for abroad. While in the Plaisance airport waiting room, I wrote to Ramgoolam: "You were the one who was right, we must not release them right away."

[Question] You were burdened by the "Adelaide Azor affair" all through that period...

[Answer] This affair was to be as harmful to us as that of Surath.

[Question] Do you think that the public believes that you were unquestionably involved in that affair?

[Answer] Yes. The MMM had succeeded in convincing the public. But can you see me kill someone? I, who is against capital punishment and the guillotine! To kill by premeditation is against my inner nature.

[Question] Don't you think that there is serious presumptive evidence against you? The car that brought the killers belonged to Francois Nicol, one of your intimates. Paul Sarah, the offender, is often visited by you and your friends when he is in prison... Those are facts...

[Answer] There are answers to all of this, as you call it. All the cars purchased at the time of the elections were in Francois Nicol's name. We left them in the officials' hands after the elections. That car had been given to Ignace Balloo. I do not know Paul Sarah. Celestin and Balloo were both party officials. The circumstances

under which all this took place must be understood. Terror prevailed in Curepipe at the time. MMM members would go looking for our people everyday to beat them up. In order to escape his pursuers, a minor official stayed half of the night in the lake, near the Curepipe Casino. Another one was cut in the abdomen in Berenger's presence. It happened in the Quatre Bornes stadium. Luc Bax was a witness and he is still afraid to testify. We lived in terror. One day, they threatened to come and destroy the home of Ignace Balloo, our senior official. Ignace is a violent man. He has always told me the truth. I believe that he had a rifle ready to shoot these people if they came to his door. He asked me if he could shoot and I told him yes. I told him: "Yes, there are people who start throwing rocks at your house..." He had a young child and his mother was dying. I told him. "If people come and attack your home, try not to kill." I urged him to defend his home. But Paul Sarah, who had already been convicted of his wife's murder, was at Ignace's, and they began to drink with the other officials. He took Ignace's rifle at that time and left with a few people. At no time was Alain Celestin, who has been convicted, with them. He was convicted for nothing.

[Question] If he had nothing to do with the PSMD, how do you explain Sarah's presence with your party officials?

[Answer] He had been released from prison and he knew these people. He is the one who got them all excited. Sarah, carrying a rifle, decided to leave. Ignace Balloo panicked, got in his car and gave chase after learning that his rifle had been "pinched." He arrived on Chateau-neuf Street and he saw all these mask-wearing people with Sarah. They opened fire at that time and Ignace became an eye witness to the murder. Only one person, Dev Virahsawmy, told the truth about that affair. He was the only man not to lie under oath and in his testimony. As for Berenger he lied under oath and throughout the case. Question Dev Virahsawmy, he will tell you so. The MMM people knew who used this car and they named names, like that, haphazardly; that is how they came up with Alain Celestin's name, whereas he was not even there. Balloo was behind, in another car, and that is how he was always thought to have been supervising what was about to happen. It was not like that at all.

[Question] Were the people with Sarah truly PSMD officials?

[Answer] Yes. And they were in on it. Naturally I do not believe that Azor Adelaide was their target. I would guess they were looking for Berenger, or for one of the MMM's chief cadgers, because Adelaide did not account for anything in the MMM. He was an unknown.

[Question] Why did they decide to shoot at the car in which Azor Adelaide was sitting?

[Answer] That does not mean anything! They aimed at the first passing MMM car...

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[Question] How and when were you informed of this affair?

[Answer] I was immediately told what had happened. I was leading a political meeting near Azor Adelaide's house, in my brother Herve's home. The police came to let me know. I immediately decided to assume my responsibility. All those people came to my house that evening to tell me what had happened. I believed them. I believed them because I know that my people never lie to me. I know that there was a misunderstanding. I know that Alain Celestin was not in the group. I weighed the consequences and decided not to abandon them...

[Question] Do you regret today having "gotten mixed up" to that extent in that affair?

[Answer] No. Not at all. It was very detrimental to me. But on the other hand, I gained the reputation of being loyal to my friends, my officials, etc. In another way, it made my strength.

[Question] Do you think that, at the time, we were on the verge of what could have deteriorated into a civil war?

[Answer] I sincerely believe so. I am not sure Ramgoolam was aware of it. All the elements were present at the time. The smallest of sparks could have unleashed it. No one knows why it did not happen. It is by the greatest of hazards that I came back to the country at that time. As a rule, I was supposed to accompany Ramgoolam, who was going on an official visit to China. But having assessed the situation, I decided to stay and I shared my worries with him about the seriousness of the situation. "We are on the verge of an insurrection. I believe that we should stay." We then decided that I would be the one to stay and I found myself in the middle of this business.

[Question] Why did you decide to get a lawyer to defend Paul Sarah, when he was not one of your intimates?

[Answer] No one wanted to defend those who had been charged. I then hired a lawyer to defend them all, including Paul Sarah. You do not leave someone alone, like that, without legal means, even if you do not know that person...

[Question] Later, when Paul Sarah was imprisoned for the murder of Azor Adelaide, you were seen going often to visit him in the Beau Bassin prison. That is a lot for someone you do not know, no?

[Answer] I never visited him. I went to the prison, but it was to visit my friends Ignace Balloo and Alain Celestin. I have never met Paul Sarah and people will eventually have to understand that!

[Question] Did this business affect your political career for a long time?

[Answer] It was very detrimental to the PMSD and it continues to be as of this day. According to some people, I share a responsibility for this murder.

[Question] Sixteen years have gone by. Even with hindsight, can you still assert that you did not share in the responsibility?

[Answer] I often review the very intense moments of my existence, including, sometimes, that one: no. I am not responsible, neither directly, nor indirectly.

[Question] We are in 1971. Have you already met Paul Berenger?

[Answer] No, not yet.

[Question] This meeting was not to take place before 1975. Why did you decide at that precise moment that this meeting could be considered?

[Answer] There were go-betweens...

[Question] Jean-Claude Pages?

[Answer] At the time, Paul Berenger and I were active in the unions. After the coalition broke down, I threw myself wholeheartedly into trade unionism and the People's Trade Unions met with a certain success. That is when Paul Berenger requested to meet me. He wanted us to side with each other. Much later, I learned that he wanted to meet me because he was afraid of a drain within his unions. Some were already beginning to join us...

[Question] You spoke about the breakdown of the coalition. Will we ever know why it happened so suddenly?

[Answer] It was something like a divorce. There never is a single reason why two people part company...

[Question] Was the Mahebourg base one of the main reasons, these military "facilities" that you wanted to give the French in exchange for development aid to the town of Mahebourg?

[Answer] One of the main reasons, probably. It was a question of allowing French planes to use the Plaisance airport in case of an emergency, in exchange for which, Paris agreed to open a base at Mahebourg and take care of rebuilding our airport. Mahebourg was not going to become a military base. The deal was being discussed between Pierre Messmer and Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who was accompanied by our ambassador to Paris Sir Guy Forget. I was not even apprised of the situation. When he went to the meeting, even Guy Forget did not know that Ramgoolam was going to talk about Mahebourg. Coming out of the meeting, SSR said out loud in front of everybody: "That is done, I gave Mahebourg to the French." That is how it happened. It was my good friend Jean Francois Deniau who told me about it. I was so surprised that I pretended to know about it when, in truth, I knew nothing! Nothing, whatsoever! Yet, I was the minister of foreign affairs! SSR and I went on a trip and, coming back, we had to stop in Paris to sign the necessary papers. Ramgoolam spoke to me in the plane about his Mahebourg agreement with Messmer and the French Government. He knew that I approved.



So, we arrived in Paris to sign this agreement. At the time, even the cabinet had not been informed. When he was in Paris, Ramgoolam always stayed at the Lutetia Hotel. As always, I had made a reservation at the George V, not because I am wealthier than Ramgoolam, but simply because I have friends there, namely, Sauget, the hotel director, who had placed a suite at my disposal in the hotel for the whole year. They were magnificent apartments. Ramgoolam told me that this time he wanted to stay at the George V. I thought it was an excellent idea, the vicinity of our two rooms facilitating our getting together to talk. Knowing his taste, Forget reserved a tiny room for him. The next day, we set up the meeting with Pierre Messmer in Ramgoolam's room. There was going to be an exchange of letters between our two governments, concerning the official acceptance of the Mahebourg base. That is when Ramgoolam told me: "We need to rent a suite to receive Pierre Messmer; this is really too small." I then offered my suite, which was clearly larger. We went to look at it and, entering, Ramgoolam glance around the room and, viewing this luxury, said: "If someone says that I am the king, you must be an emperor." I became immediately aware that from that moment on he was suspicious. It was the beginning of the deal falling through. He refused to give the letter advising of our agreement but, on the other hand, he took the letter from the French Government. What happened? No one will know for sure. Did the English intervene at the last minute? When he saw how I was being treated at the George V, did he think that I was "France's man," that is to say, that I was being paid by these people? I do not know. In any case, when Messmer arrived, he took his letter, but he did not give him the one from the Mauritian Government accepting the offer. We returned to Mauritius and the French ambassador would call me every day. "What an humiliation for France," he would said, and for Deniau, who resigned shortly thereafter, partially because of this affair. The ambassador asked for, at least, the return of the letter. He called Boolell several weeks later to discuss the case. The latter felt that, at least, the letter should be returned. Ramgoolam continued to refuse. That is when I decided: "I am the minister of foreign affairs, and I cannot accept that an agreement signed between two countries be handled this way." I, therefore, waited for the opportune time to resign. The occasion presented itself when Ringadoo proposed to tax the little people 10 percent. I asked him to review his decision. He refused categorically. I decided to resign. I did not suspect that there would be so many defectors...

[Question] Official documents show that it is Ramgoolam who dismissed you and not you who resigned...

[Answer] He sent me the letter a few hours after I informed him about my decision to vote against the 10-percent tax (a vote that was going before Parliament the next day), and to sit with the opposition. By firing me, he won one point before the public, but what a lack of elegance for partners who had been so courteous toward him!

[Question] The coalition having been dissolved, you were found in the opposition where you were very active in the trade union movement. This lead, as we previously mentioned, to a meeting between you and Paul Berenger. Was this meeting the result of pure strategy or was it the result of certain affinities between the MMM leader and yourself?

[Answer] I believe that we met on the basis of some sort of "anti-Ramgoolamism." I was angry with Ramgoolam, so was Berenger, and we wanted to "destroy" him politically. We had not discussed it in those terms, but the desire was there under the surface. I think we both understood it.

[Question] How did the meeting go with this man who had been your staunch political enemy?

[Answer] Very cordially. Over a drink at his house. He was adamant about not coming to my house because, he said, of the "cadgers."

[Question] Was that the meeting that was dubbed the "Joint Socks Front?"

[Answer] No. That happened much later. I had gone to several meetings and I had brought my tuxedo with me because I was to attend a cocktail party in Princess Alexandra's honor. That same afternoon I had given a tea in her honor in the Saint Geran Hotel. During this small reception, I was telling her (we were very good friends) that I was meeting Berenger that very afternoon. During my meeting with Berenger I realized that I was wearing red socks. I asked Paul if he had a pair of black socks to lend me. He loaned me a pair. I called the Redit to warn that I would be arriving a little late at the cocktail party. When I arrived, the princess asked me how my meeting with Berenger had gone. As a kind of anecdote, I told her the story about the socks. All of that remained strictly between us. Much later, in London, she met Mrs Teelock, the wife of the former Mauritian high commissioner to England, and, in the course of a friendly conversation, she told her the story. It very quickly crossed to oceans to reach Mauritius, where it spread like wild fire, putting several people ill at ease...

[Question] How did you begin the conversation with Berenger. Did you tackle the subject directly?

[Answer] Yes, we spoke about joint union strategy...

[Question] You did not talk about political strategy?

[Answer] No, but it was well understood that we would talk about it later. I believe that Berenger had understood that; as I had, by the way. We had agreed that nothing would prevent us from tackling the political aspect of the situation if the trade union alliance went well. I was faced by a cordial, direct, and precise man, in short, an intelligent man, with whom conversation was easy. For a moment, I even thought that this man could be trusted... But, unfortunately, the future proved me wrong. Something Berenger did disappointed me deeply. A few weeks after our meeting, we were together to

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defend the workers of the transport industry. I was contesting a judgment of the Court and had made the point that the compensation allocated to the workers was inadequate. I was doing my job as a lawyer. I spoke to Paul about it. He replied with these appalling words, which chilled my blood: "That is a good thing. If they have too much, they will stop being activists." I, the lawyer, had argued with all my heart to win the case, but I discovered that people were willing to do anything in the name of politics. This sentence revealed the inner temperament of the man and his lack of feelings before events and people.

[Question] Did you think at the time that a political agreement was possible between this left-wing man and you, a right-wing man?

[Answer] Why not? He had become a democrat. There were no differences between the MMM and the PMSD, except for a few small differences on foreign policy. By the way, just like today...

[Question] If everything was so rosy between you, why was there a total break in negotiations a few months later?

[Answer] Everything broke down because he played a dirty trick during the civil service strike. At the People's Trade Unions, we wanted to rely on his unions, as he, himself, had done for his strikes. After leading us to believe that he would cooperate with us as we had with him, he dropped us at the last minute. On the day we went on strike, the GWF [General Workers Federation]

unions did not follow us as agreed. He committed a serious error on that day. As of that time, I cut off all contacts. I have maintained good relations with some unionists.

[Question:] When you met Berenger, did you, at any time, think that your relief had arrived, inasmuch as minorities would, hereafter, have a new leader?

[Answer] No, never. Furthermore, had I perceived Berenger under another light, things would have been different for Mauritius. After the 1976 elections, I sent an emissary to try and arrange a meeting with Berenger. When the results of the elections became known, we had seven or eight seats and we provided the balance. Wherever we went, the involved party took over. I, therefore, had someone get in touch with Berenger. I never contemplated striking an alliance with the MMM. I simply wanted to obtain certain guarantees from Berenger as to the smooth running of democracy and of our alignment toward the West. I was ready, with my party, to give him tactical support, that is to say, to vote in Parliament with the MMM. I thought that the time for alternate power sharing had come. The MMM would have seized power and we were ready to support it. Do you know what answer Berenger sent back to me? That I had to come before his "politburo" to explain myself. Do you see me talking with the MMM "politburo?" I immediately broke off relations. I only talk with people, not structures. But at the time Berenger let himself be taken in by Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo, who was discussing with him a possible PT/MMM alliance. What happened is known. SSR formed an alliance with us.

**Chapter 6: "I Wanted To Tell Our Supporters:  
'Join the MMM!'"**

[Question] For the first time in your political career, you were defeated in the parliamentary elections of 1976 and your party found itself on the sideline with half a dozen seats in Parliament. How did you take this defeat?

[Answer] It has remained a great mystery for me. Even Ramgoolam had sent me word not to run in the No 4 Port Lamy/Montagne Longue district. I don't know why I was bent on doing it anyway. Was it because I subconsciously wanted to provoke a defeat? Thinking back, it seems to me that I was searching for my Waterloo with some sort of ferocious determination...

[Question] A few months later, when you had just begun your crossing of the wilderness, the famous "Sheik Hossen" affair occurred. It could be viewed as a godsend for you. You threw yourself into it with a passion. Was it an opportunity to restore your reputation?...

[Answer] It was a golden opportunity to leave the wilderness. I must tell you that, despite this crossing of the wilderness, I had resumed my profession as a lawyer and I had remained a little in the news. When Fulena asked me to defend him after some accusations were made against him, it was a little like a validation for me: I do not believe that Fulena liked me very much. Yet, he was the one who gave me the opportunity of getting back into the limelight! I wanted to win this case. The testimonies helped me very much. I have noticed one thing: witnesses come and testify more willingly when I defend a case. When I took the case, dozens of people came to see me and brought me information. It helped me a lot. I thus got "ammunition" to fight Sheik Hossen. The country was in difficulty. There were undercurrents that could lead one to assume that anything could happen. I succeeded in defusing this bomb in my cross-examination of Sheik Hossen and the witness Bedos. The medical evidence was the key that trapped Sheik Hossen. He thought that he was so smart that he could even lie to the doctor. That is the very sign of a psychopath. It was Charles Yip Tong who came one day to tell me that, according to his observations, it was almost obvious that we were dealing with a psychopath. He explained it to me medically. This trial has proved to be one of the most interesting of my career. I remember clashes with Robert Ahnee, who did not want me to represent Fulena, arguing that the latter had to be represented by someone from the public prosecutor's office. We went to see Chief Judge Maurice Rault who decided in my favor.

[Question] Still, you had ulterior political motives when you accepted to defend Fulena...

[Answer] I refused to believe, as Berenger claimed, that Ramgoolam had planned an assassination. I knew Ramgoolam well enough to know that he could not do such a thing. I could have believed torching Le Mauricien, if worst came to worst, but killing an old man was really impossible to believe when you know the kind of a man

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam has been. I was, therefore, already convinced that I was dealing with a liar when I entered the case.

[Question] Did you consult Ramgoolam before taking the case?

[Answer] No. We saw each other during the trial. I had questions to ask him. We were discussing the strategy to be followed...

[Question] The trial, then, was simply and purely a political one...

[Answer] At that time, yes! Not before. Many people believed that the government was going to fall. I had also been able to give Berenger a hard time on several occasions. I knew that the latter was already sensing that he was going to lose. He told Jugnauth one day when I was in court besides him: "I believe that we are going to lose." Since all the lawyers had their robes on, I do not believe that Berenger noticed that I was standing next to Anerood. "It's done for," Berenger was saying, "We are dealing with a liar."

[Question] Which leads one to think that Paul Berenger was really sincere in this whole affair...

[Answer] I sincerely believe that he had been deceived. But I also think that he should have become aware of it sooner. Against all odds, he upheld certain accusations that he knew to be false.

[Question] I suspect you of having taken the case more because of Berenger than because of Sheik Hossen himself...

[Answer] It is true, to a degree. I wanted to measure myself against him on my home front. I was playing "home"/ [in English]...

[Question] You were once again facing this man with whom, a few years earlier, you had discussed the Joint Trade Union Front. How did you feel? Was the man facing you simply an opponent to be destroyed?

[Answer] A little like that. He was there before me, somewhat at loose ends. I believe that he was slightly "ill" at the time. Constantly taking notes was an obsession with him at the time. He wrote constantly. He would never look a person in the eye. He had writing diarrhea. I, for one, expected to see him at least raise his head to say hello, since we had already met. I must confess that when I am working as a lawyer, I, too, am so busy that the personality of the witnesses always remains a little vague. I was feeling strong. I was in my element. I was thinking of Ramgoolam who would often tell his labor ministers: "Be careful, you can 'bloody well' try to pick as many political quarrels with Duval as you want, but don't ever tackle him on legal matters, you would lose for sure."

[Question] Was it always possible to have discussions with Ramgoolam?



[Answer] Always. Even if it was to throw ironic barbs at each other. We were civilized enough to speak to each other, whatever the circumstances. Even when he would sometimes threaten me, as in the Sanjay Khan case. One day, the latter invited us to take an aperitif with him. There we were, facing each other. It was just after the breakdown of the coalition. Ramgoolam told me: "If you keep it up, I will have you thrown in jail." I immediately replied: "You know, I am not Berenger! If I go to jail, I advise you to get protection for your wife, your children and yourself. My men will get you without my giving a single order!" Sanjay Khan was panic-stricken. To this day, he still talks about it. That is what makes the difference between Berenger and me. I still have fanatics on my side, who would kill for me without my saying a single word.

[Question] What did Ramgoolam answer?

[Answer] Nothing. Faithful to his style, he began to talk about other things as though nothing had happened. But I believe that I scared him for the first time in his life. He reacted strongly.

[Question] Let us return to the Sheik Hossen affair. What made you think, as you asserted at the time, that it was a plot?

[Answer] Sheik Hossen himself had invented his own personage. The MMM also realized that the opportunity for inventions was there; for saying a little more; and for causing the government to fall. I do not believe that the MMM told Sheik Hossen to invent all of that, unless it was Darga who was very close to him. It is even rumored that they are brothers. When the MMM saw that he was losing, it began to invent plot after plot. That is how it did itself in! In my opinion, Sheik Hossen was a sick man. Moreover, I defended him later. I am no stranger to his subsequent departure from Mauritius with the guarantee that he would not return.

[Question] Do you think that there is a link between the fire that occurred at the Mauritian Embassy in Belgium and this affair?

[Answer] I have no official proofs, but I am convinced that the two events were linked. I ordered an on-site investigation in Belgium, which could not provide concrete proofs. But it was not a hazard...

[Question] By the way, was it the Ramgoolam regime that you were defending in this trial...

[Answer] Absolutely. I was defending a regime against an opposition that wanted to overthrow it. I sensed that the government was in danger. We found ourselves in the same position as during the 1971 strikes. Berenger once again missed his opportunity. Had there been generalized strikes during the Sheik Hossen affair, he could have seized power without much difficulty. He had the public's approval at the beginning of the case. Ramgoolam and his regime were so weak that he would have handed over the reins.

[Question] How do you interpret this practice of Berenger to always "miss," in your opinion, an opportunity?

[Answer] Some horses are like that. Berenger does not know the Mauritian people well enough. I believe that he is an universalist and an internationalist more than he is a Mauritian. I do not believe that he has yet truly fathomed the Mauritian nature. He is missing what Ramgoolam and I have always had, namely, intuition.

[Question] What if all these "failures," as you call them, were simply due to his being a staunch democrat?

[Answer] I believe that, at the time of Sheik Hossen, he was convinced elections were a ruse. He could seize power without elections, and he intended to keep it had he taken it with the elections. To get back to his lack of intuition, look at the 1982 elections. How did he fail to sense that everyone wanted him for prime minister? Why did he have to go and invent Jugnauth? To build him up from scratch? How did he fail to sense that he was the leader, that he was the one people loved and followed? I will say it again, he is too calculating, not sufficiently intuitive! It is a pity for an intelligent man. He is making the same mistake with Nababsingh. If he wins the August 1987 elections, a lack of coherent consistency will continue, whereas there is no reason whatsoever for any of this. People know that should Nababsingh be elected, the same problem will happen that happened with Jugnauth. Berenger does not realize that, sometimes, the position makes the man. Our constitution give such powers to the prime minister that anybody performing those duties becomes emancipated and distances himself from the party. All these facts lead me to believe that Berenger is suffering from a lack of confidence in himself. This explains why he sometimes fails to take advantages of the opportunities, which are often due to his own work! All of that is Freudian! Let us be serious, I believe that Berenger is subconsciously "worried" by his social class. Franco-Mauritian is a hated word in Mauritius. Why does Berenger use it in and out of season? Does he not realize that it hinders him considerably? The label certainly applies in his case. But it has such a pejorative connotation in the Mauritian context!...

[Question] Can the 1967 PMSD, headed by Gaetan Duval, really blame someone for being close to the Franco-Mauritian community?...

[Answer] I am not blaming him. I am merely making an observation. There are idiots and smart people in that community too; as in others. Intelligence is the only race I recognize. There have been ups and downs with that community, but I, nonetheless, still have friends among its people. I believe that Berenger's ethnic affinities came into play at some point in his career, after 1982, when he stopped scaring the capitalists with the measures he was taking. It is then, I believed that he let his ethnic

affinities come into play. Incidentally, the whole Franco-Mauritian population voted for him in the 1983 elections. They all discovered suddenly that they had kinship ties with him... He was received everywhere... And it cost him the 1983 elections. Everybody used this issue, except for me, who always refused to play that card, because I agreed with him about the the 57 million rupees in sugar exit duties. Because of it, he lost seats in Quatre Bornes, Beau Bassin, Vacoas/Phoenix, and Riviere des Anguilles. In my opinion, he would have won the elections had it not been for these 57 million rupees, because he was still very strong. It was very unfair, but, after all, what can you do...

[Question] Don't you feel that the Mauritian label also caused your fall? We remember the young Creole of the 1967's, so proud to find himself once again within the Franco-Mauritian community...received with open arms...

[Answer] I am and will remain a Creole. I may have been lightly intoxicated. But from there to identify myself with them and to associate only with them... I spare no one. There are people of all colors at my house. I praise intelligence, whatever its source.

[Question] Do you sincerely believe that you never had prejudices?

[Answer] When you are born and raised in Mauritius, you have, from the start, inborn prejudices. To a degree, my family was sheltered from them because there were whites and blacks among us. That is why I will not stand on a stage to speak about capitalists who whipped their workers, because my ancestors may very well have been among these advocates of negro slavery. Genetically, I come from everywhere. When you travel and are accepted everywhere, you realize that you are above everything. I was received by the French elite and I was the interlocutor of the French Government...

[Question] When facing France, you seem to be, you who proudly claim your Creole heritage, a little like the pupil before the teacher.

[Answer] Maybe. I feel very dependent on France. Everything pulls me that way, culture, friendships, and even a certain moderation. While I talk about the magic of Mauritius as a country, I have never believed, as some people do, that we are the world's navel, or that we are very important on an international level...

[Question] From 1976 to 1982, you were neither deputy, nor minister. How did a man of power like you weather this?

[Answer] As best as I could. Nicol Francois was minister of Rodrigues. I worked with him. We made agricultural plans; we brought electricity to the island; and we implemented many things...

[Question] Can all of that replace "the lost honor" of the fallen leader?

[Answer] I was still mayor. Consequently, I still had a little power. I was still interested in politics. I had my job as a lawyer. I pleaded cases against the government, the Lefevre report case in particular, which incidentally resulted in the resignation of the PSMD ministers, except for the eternal defectors. My legal profession sustained me enormously during this crossing of the wilderness. I place Ramgoolam's decline at that period...

[Question] Do you think that he was aware of what you call his "decline?"

[Answer] No. He was cut off from Mauritius. His intelligence services were hiding everything from him. They were afraid of him. That is often what happens to dictators. It is a little like what happened to the Persians a long time ago. The bearer of bad news was put to death...

[Question] In your opinion, was Ramgoolam a dictator?

[Answer] Yes. One of the most adaptable dictators I have ever known. He would never listened to anybody, except for me, sometimes; to such an extent that when I left the 1973 coalition, the ambassador of India came to see me and told me: "Now that you have left, there is no one to influence Ramgoolam and that is sad." Ringadoo may have been another one able to influence him. Besides us, no one else! The decline had begun. I sensed in 1982 that the storm was approaching. Moreover, if you read the reports of the meetings that I was submitting during that campaign, you will note that I kept saying: "A cyclone is going to pass over Mauritius, we do not know what will happen to us." I knew very well that it was going to happen. The U.S. ambassador had announced the 60-0 results to my brother Herve, specifying: "There may be one survivor at Beau Bassin, your brother." Ramgoolam was the only one to see nothing. Our electoral system can cause the 60-0 results to recur. This electoral system, in which an additional 5 percent votes can bring the loss of all the seats, could result in the total destruction of the MMM in the 1987 elections. The latter runs the risk of finding itself in the same position as the PSMD in 1976. To get back to Ramgoolam, his decline had begun and he had given me the impression, since 1976, that he was a man who was quietly fulfilling his destiny without trying to fight it. He carried the whole party and the country with him.

[Question] Why did you negotiate with him once again for the 1982 elections, asking to be the sole representative of the general population?

[Answer] Once again, no other solutions. But Ramgoolam chose Francois Eliezer and Blackburn and his RPL [expansion unknown], a party set up from scratch to replace the PSMD and me in particular. That is when I decided to run in four districts. In other words, I entered the battle for the glory...



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[Question] Could you think at the time that, 9 months later, you would be the vice prime minister of Mauritius, a position that you had never occupied, even at the peak of your popularity?

[Answer] Not at all. I greeted the MMM victory with serenity and I told the journalists: "When there is such a communion between a people and a party, one must withdraw." I was ready to dissolve my party in the months to come, in order to give free rein to those young people who had made the unanimity of the Mauritian people. They later committed an unforgivable error by firing my brother Herve, a gratuitous gesture, not even necessary. And I had been so classy toward them. It somewhat got on my nerves. Something else also offended me very much. One day, in Paris, I wanted to introduce Berenger to some of my contacts, merely to help him out. He was in power and I did not see why he should not get as many chances to succeed as possible. I wanted to introduce him to Gilbert Trigano, for example. Whereas both of us had found ourselves in Paris and, politically, I was on my way out, he simply refused to receive me... I was finished. I was merely trying to show a little love for my country. One must have a really weird mind to have this type of reaction. He refused to see me out of arrogance; he probably did not want to owe me anything!

[Question] You said that you were ready to dissolve the PMSD. Why did you not do it? Did it once again involve one of these retreats that you announce to stage a better comeback?

[Answer] Not at all. I was on the verge of dissolving my party which, in my opinion, had no more reasons to be. But I suddenly realized that, despite our desire to collaborate, the MMM was refusing to take a freely given hand. We were not expecting anything in return. It was a simple gesture of handing the torch to these young people who had just succeeded and were representing the population's hope. But Berenger understood nothing of our action. It is impossible for him to consider that a man could undertake a gratuitous action, without ulterior political motives. I wanted to make a patriotic gesture to make Berenger understand that I did not intend to lead a systematic and sterile opposition. I hate that. I have passed the age when you hope for a cyclone or any kind of calamity to discredit the government and win a few more voices!

[Question] You have become a man of power and of power only. Does being in the opposition frighten you?

[Answer] No. But let us say that I have passed the age when I could rejoice in the country's misfortunes hoping to profit from them. This, after all, is the nature of the opposition, even if some people refuse to admit it.

[Question] Let us return to the question of why you did not go through the PMSD's dissolution...

[Answer] I wanted to tell our supporters in straightforward, or almost, language: "Join the MMM." It is

multiracial, young, and includes intelligent men, what more do you want. So much for that. What I wanted before I retired was to be accepted personally by the new leaders. I wanted them to recognize that I had worked for my country and, if they wanted to, I was ready to be of service by presiding over a commission or something of that nature. I wanted to participate with them in the recovery work.

[Question] To become an ambassador to the Western countries, for example?...

[Answer] No. Not at the time. The job of ambassador is not a prestigious position nowadays. Unless you want to live in Europe and you have a passion for intellectual activities. It is a form of sinecure. When the post of ambassador was offered to Boodhoo, he answered that he refused to be Jugnauth's baggage handler and, to a degree, he was right. But if one wants to write, it is valid... I wanted to make the MMM aware that, without Ramgoolam and I, all the "Mauritius" knowledge, which we had accumulated for many years, would be lost. Despite all these good intentions, I believe that I declared war on the MMM because of the "Herve Duval" affair. My brother and I are very, very close. We are more than brothers, we are friends. When he was "thrown" out by Jean Claude de L'Estrac, as though he was a boor, he took the thing very badly and he gradually became depressed. Had he taken the thing rather well, I would have stayed out of it. But I could not remain uninvolved when I saw how much it had affected him. I feared for his health. That is when I understood that, not only were these people idiots, but what was more serious, they had no heart. I took my distance and I launched the hostilities. I changed my behavior toward them. I thought that De L'Estrac had only to transfer my brother to another ministry, as I had done for Robert Honore, who is a staunch MMM member and whom I could not keep in the ministry of foreign affairs. But that was no excuse for firing him. To get back to the MMM, I changed my behavior even faster after being insulted by slick people, like Dyalah and cohorts, every time I spoke in Parliament. These people did not have a gift for tactfulness and subtlety. I began to take firm positions in Parliament. I submitted a motion of blame in connection with the dismissal of Parliament. They had not proceeded according to the rules. I asked them to offer their excuses. They refused. Khodabux began to insult me. I understood then that I was through with them. The Delaire affair also contributed to my departure. That is when the disagreements within the MMM began to appear. In view of this situation, I decided not to dissolve my party. I waited for further developments. When the announcement was made that Boodhoo was going to be ousted, I saved Jugnauth's head. I contacted the governor general, Sir Dayendranath Burrenchobay. I told him to ask Jugnauth to wait before firing Boodhoo. He called Jugnauth the next day and he then informed me that the latter was thinking about not firing Boodhoo and the PSM [Mauritian Socialist Party]. Boodhoo was going to hold a press conference to announce his resignation. I sent my sister Ghislaine to tell him not to



resign. She has always had a good relationship with Harish, who then changed his decision. A few days later, it was the MMM that resigned...

[Question] With hindsight, do you believe, as some people do, that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's hand was behind this MMM/PSM crisis?

[Answer] I do not think so. It was inevitable. It is something that happens when someone is placed in a responsible position by an official who thinks that he will be able to manipulate and control that person. It happened to me many times in my career. I would appoint mayors who supposedly would carry out instructions but who would "send you to hell" as soon as they were in office. As soon as Jugnauth assumed power, he was immediately taken in hand by the labor establishment that gave him its support, with the police, for example. At first, the chief of police did his "briefing" [in English] with the Berenger, L'Estrac, Jugnauth, etc. collegial body. But Jugnauth understood very quickly that he, and he alone, was the chief of police and that he was to do the briefing alone. He sent for the telex machine that was in de L'Estrac office in order to control the telegrams being sent and received. To get back to Ramgoolam, I believe he did nothing. On the other hand, I believe that Jugnauth must have received some guarantees from Burrenchobay.

[Question] Were the bases of the 1983 alliance already laid?

[Answer] Everything was in place. Jugnauth acted very correctly toward me. He got out and broke free from the group. He was in conflict with them.

[Question] Do you think that Aneerood Jugnauth was aware that Berenger wanted to manipulate him when he nominated him for prime minister?

[Answer] Absolutely. He accepted with his eyes wide open. He knew that Berenger was the leader, just as Nababsingh knew. But, backed by Burrenchobay and the labor establishment, he felt his wings growing. I believe that Mrs Jugnauth was a precious ally. She comforted and encouraged him... Mutual friends took it upon themselves to tell Jugnauth about my inner thoughts, that is to say, to assure him that should trouble occur, I would be on his side. Berenger set up this showdown because he was impatient. He wanted to overthrow Jugnauth. He told himself that the latter would resign on his behalf.

[Question] Do you believe, as some people have claimed, that he had a foreign power behind him?

[Answer] I believe that Libya was closely monitoring the situation. For example, Boodhoo would tell me that the Libyan ambassador would enter De L'Estrac's office without knocking... At the time, France was closer to Berenger than to Jugnauth. But I do not believe that

France interfered. It supported him as it supports Rene in the Seychelles, because of the French-speaking population.

[Question] At what time did you officially decided to join Jugnauth?

[Answer] Jugnauth asked for my support as soon as he disassociated himself from Berenger. I gave it to him under certain conditions: that elections, in particular, would be held as quickly as possible. He then made me understand that we would form an alliance. Then, one day, the alliance came to pass. That it happened is one of Boodhoo's great achievements. He was its architect. He is the one who explained to us the urgency of this alliance. He was very reasonable and everybody understood very quickly. The contact with Jugnauth went very well. Berenger, who asked to meet with me, was also very correct.

[Question] Did you meet Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam before you concluded the alliance with Jugnauth?

[Answer] Yes. Often. He too became involved as soon as Jugnauth disassociated himself from Berenger. He advised me to agree to the alliance. He was the wheeler-dealer and canny man that we had always known. He has an instinctive sense of tactics. He had a lot to do with the implementation of the alliance with Jugnauth. I believe that he was afraid that I would implement an alliance with Berenger. I was purposely giving this impression, whereas Berenger and the MMM had never showed any intention of signing an agreement with us. For those who think on the basis of communalism, the Berenger-Duval alliance could be a logical occurrence.

[Question] What about you? Is such an alliance possible, even today?

[Answer] Why not? It remains in the realm of the possible. The MMM has become more reasonable with the reality of power. It is following an economically viable policy. Their foreign policy is the only issue about which I disagree with them. I am thinking about their position toward Libya, Morocco, France, etc... Besides that, they did very well.

[Question] We are now at the 1983 election. You find yourself on a platform next to people whom you have fought relentlessly throughout your whole political life, namely, Dev Virahsawmy, Anerood Jugnauth, Kader Bhayat, etc.... How did these meetings go?

[Answer] In the course of the campaign, I became friendly with Dev, a man whom I would call brilliant. Peter Craig and I were the labor anchors of this campaign. In Dev, I found once again a man for whom I had had much respect since the Azor Adelaide affair. As I mentioned before, he was the only one who told the truth. We were a united team, for each knew, by winning the elections, that each had work to the best of his abilities. It was the victory of all. Jugnauth called me after the elections and offered me the post of minister of

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foreign affairs. I told him: "No way!" The PMSD was supposed to have two portfolios. Anil Gayan telephoned him during our meeting and I became aware that he wanted the ministry of foreign affairs. Jugnauth told him that I happened to be right there and that I was asking a second ministry for my brother Herve. Gayan told him: "Send them packing!" Jugnauth answered: "We fought together and we must continue together." He then turned to me and Bhayat and offered the latter the position of vice prime minister. Bhayat insisted that he wanted the commerce portfolio. That is when I requested the post of vice prime minister and attorney general in order not to embarrass him vis-a-vis Gayan. He simply answered: "We shall see about that later." He later informed me that I was vice prime minister. It all happened without the least difficulty. During the campaign, each one of us had taken up an issue and something extraordinary happened: a feeling of unity, which the people perceived a hundred percent, came through

all of our differences in attitude and style. I personally spoke about economic recovery...

[Question] The alliance was of unparalleled aggressiveness toward the press. Was it deliberate?

[Answer] Le Mauricien and L'Express were totally pro-Berenger. Fear made us aggressive. We were afraid that the influence exerted by the newspapers would be so strong that the people would be fooled. Yet, deep down, we faced the possibility that the MMM could win. We were aware of the small margin that separated us, and the press could make the difference in favor of the MMM. The margin, in the percentage of votes, was effectively small. The only ones not to capitalize on the alliance were the brothers Michel. They were somewhat like ducks among hens! They hated me! They were with us because they could not be in the opposite camp after their differences with Berenger.

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## Chapter 7: "Beauty Has No Gender"

[Question] Sir Gaetan Duval, your relationship with the press in the course of your political career has been so stormy that they bring to mind the passion between lovers...

[Answer] Absolutely. It has always been a "love and hate"/[in English] relationship. Chronically.

[Question] Whenever you have attacked journalists, you have given the impression that, to some degree, you regret not being one...

[Answer] To be a journalist was one of my fondest dreams. I was probably born to be a journalist. Even after I became a lawyer, I thought more than once of leaving the bar to become a professional journalist. I tried to publish a newspaper called L'Express, before the current one. I founded a company to print that paper. I wanted to pattern it on France's L'Express. It was in 1958-1959. I had found the building, but I was unable to secure the necessary financing. Yet, at the time, it was inexpensive. But I wanted a good newspaper, for I was not inclined to leave my profession to publish a newspaper that would be subsidized or operating on incidental expenses. I wanted something serious, capable of providing a living.

[Question] How do you view today's Mauritian press?

[Answer] I cannot help but be slightly jealous, or let us say experience a slight regret, when I see Le Mauricien. It was something I could have done had I had the means. I sincerely believe that many things could have been changed in Mauritius had I been able to launch a newspaper. In any case, I believe that I would have won the 1967 elections. Although I must say that, at the time, I was being powerfully defended by people like Andre Masson, for example. But let us say, that this will remain one of my great unanswered questions... How would have things turned out had I had a newspaper at the time?... It is difficult to say.

[Question] Is that the explanation for your many forays into the press. I am thinking about Georges Duronne of Le Populaire, Mathilde of Le Rassembleur...

[Answer] Probably. I am aware of the strong influence exerted by a newspaper. I also know perfectly well that, no matter how powerful, your message will go unnoticed if you are not backed by a newspaper that defends your ideas.

[Question] Did someone, at one time, defend you as you wanted to be defended?

[Answer] Andre Masson. The answer comes from my heart, my guts, my mind. Masson had an extraordinary pen and nature...

[Question] Is that why you harassed him so much that you destroyed him journalistically?

[Answer] There are things like that that hound you. Masson was passionate, as I am. When I refused to follow him, it ended as things must end between people consumed with passion, dramatically. When we began to hate each other, we did so as strongly as we had loved each other.

[Question] Was Andre Masson for you what today would be called a "guru?"

[Answer] Not really. He was not a "master" for me. Raoul Rivet was the only one. But we were close and full of sincerity. Our friendship was very much beyond that of a politician and a journalist...

[Question] As is often the case today with "friendships" between politicians and journalists, was he not for you a useful pawn on the chessboard?

[Answer] No. Never. It would have been impossible for me to have such a relationship with Andre Masson. We loved each other very much. I liked the way he wrote. He liked the way I spoke. We were pulling the same cart in the same direction. That is why we were so strong. Gaetan Duval did not get the 44 percent; Andre Masson and Gaetan Duval did. Everything began to turn sour when he saw that, in his opinion, I could become prime minister and that I was abandoning this ambition to form the coalition with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. He was still living with the hope that the PMSD would seize power and I would become prime minister. Consequently, when he realized that I was abandoning this idea and giving up this ambition, for him, it was akin to becoming a coward. Someone who betrayed a battle.

[Question] Did you explain your choice?

[Answer] Several times. He never gave up his idea. Before the 1969 meeting of the Place du Quai, we were already aware of our very deep differences of approach.

[Question] What did it do to you to break away from Masson?

[Answer] Emotionally to distance myself from Masson, like from Raymond Rivet and Maurice Lesage, made me suffer tremendously. Politically, it threw me into Ramgoolam's arms. It weakened me tremendously. To reach my goals and achieve what I wanted took a remarkable faith in my own destiny. With 44 percent of the votes, a strong minority at the Assembly, and Le Mauricien behind me, Ramgoolam considered me a worthwhile contender. When the situation changed with the departure of six or seven deputies and Le Mauricien began to distance itself, I was delivered, bound hands and feet, to Ramgoolam.

[Question] Seven of your deputies, probably the best, decided to leave you and you did not wonder what was happening? Did you not think that your action needed to be revised?

[Answer] I blamed Masson for everything. He was the one who had influenced them. These people had not



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thought things out on their own. Masson had placed them on a pedestal and it went to their heads. That Masson did not agree with me was not really the cause of my bitterness, but that he undertook to destroy the Mauritian Party was. Once again, he threw me into SSR's arms. Masson destroyed a party that he, to a large extent, had personally helped build.

[Question] You seem to think that, without Masson, the PMSD would not have been what it was.

[Answer] Without him, we would not have reached 44 percent. That is clear... The role of the press, this kind of press, well written and philosophically deep, is considerable...

[Question] How do you view today's press?

[Answer] The press has less influence today. The press as a whole, like the political class, has somewhat gone astray. The likes of Philippe Forget and Andre Masson are no longer there. They never were replaced. To some extent, Lindsay Riviere was good. But, already with him, the level was falling. It continues to do so. Still, Riviere had character. The press has lost its power, to such an extent that, in the 1983 elections, the MSM/PT/PMSD alliance came out victorious despite the opposition of the general press. This would have been impossible in Masson's time. The reason is simple: the press, like some priests, for example, has lost some of its credibility. Some 10 years ago, when a priest took a stand, it had a tremendous impact. Today, it goes totally unnoticed. To get back to the press, a Masson is not made every day.

[Question] You mentioned earlier that, although Masson had not been a teacher for you, Raoul Rivet was...

[Answer] I had more than a journalistic relationship with Raoul Rivet. He also was a political man. But I would like to finish with Masson. I felt in total communion with that man. He was a man who defended my ideas better than the people of my own party. That was fabulous. There was a strength in that man, which he drew from his writings and from the power of his political thinking.

[Question] What did you think when you broke up with him?

[Answer] It is important to mention that Masson was closer to Ramgoolam's ideas than to mine. We took the opposite view to find ourselves back in a position that many called reactionary and right wing. We found ourselves fighting against independence. Neither of us was anti-Indian, as others were within the party. We stood for the lofty idea of an association with Europe. In this case, it is probably our French-speaking and French-loving side that got the upper hand. We were not afraid of the Indians as such, we were afraid to part from European culture which, for us, was essentially French. But all of this was too subtle to be explained suitably. But we more or less succeeded, despite all the propaganda against us instigated by the Labor Party. In addition, we

were the recipients of all the rubbish told by people like N. M. U., etc. Even today, I wonder if people understood how Masson and I met and why we had worked together. At the time, the mere presence of Masson by my side showed that I was not as reactionary as some people wanted to make it appear. He was bringing me security from the left...

[Question] You are a right-wing man. Yet, it seems to me that you have always been ill at ease when people spoke of you as a right-wing man. Were you ever able to take charge of your ideas on that point?

[Answer] My friends were Servan Schreiber, Mendes-France... Here, I was thrown in a camp by the force of circumstances...

[Question] Would you feel at ease in a leftist's shoes?

[Answer] Look at my performance. I have always been against the death penalty and on the side of freedom, sexual and otherwise, and of the fringe. Those have been for time immemorial the private reserves of the left.

[Question] You have friends who cannot be called leftist. I am thinking of Charles Pasqua, Jacques Chirac, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Michel Debre, etc. What kind of conversations do you have with them?

[Answer] Chirac is a liberal. As for Pasqua, he may be the French minister with whom I get along the best. He has such good common sense. He reminds me of my brother Herve. But I disagree with him when he wants to ban pornographic magazines. That issue is over his head. I have always maintained leftist positions when it comes to that subject. Yet, I knew that my electorate of conservative small bourgeois totally disagreed with my position. Still, I preferred to run the risk of displeasing them than to go against my belief that a man should be free to do as he sees fit.

[Question] Don't you think that there is a gap between your nature and that of your electorate?

[Answer] Probably.

[Question] How was this electorate, which is known to be conservative, able to accept, for example, a leader with a tumultuous private life, bordering on the scandalous?...

[Answer] People respect those who have the courage of their convictions, do not conceal their true nature, and have the courage to be different. I believe that I rendered a great service to Mauritius by presuming that I could do what I wanted with my private life and do it my way against all odds, while scrupulously accomplishing my public duty as a politician, without the one infringing on the other. I liberated thousands of people. I gave politics another dimension. One has to be some sort of psychoanalyst to express precisely what I feel. I would like to say, for example, how I view the electorate: like a beautiful woman or a horse. The voters can give you everything, up to the moment when something breaks down. Nothing can be done from then on. No one even

knows why it happens. When it happens, you can walk on your head, nothing will do. The horse is like that. It must be handled gently while you maintain control. Be kind when you want to do something and everything will come your way. When the people like you, they give you everything. When they are fed up, they kick your behind. There is no solution. You must not try to make a comeback. My comeback is what has surprised me the most these past few years. I still do not understand the why and how! It will remain a big mystery to me. What is currently happening contradicts the theories in which I have always believed, and yet, I continue to believe them. Can you see how complicated all of this is... Which explains why I once became totally disinterested in politics.

[Question] Were you aware of this in 1976?

[Answer] Shortly afterward... I am surprised by the love the people have for me. Very touched also... During the Mahebourg demonstration, on the anniversary of my 30 years in politics, I was overwhelmed by the love people showed me. Why? How? I don't know. Were they disappointed by their other partners? Did they bed down with Berenger and were disappointed? They came back. All of that contradicts my theories. I will confess something to you: when I saw these people in Mahebourg I asked myself, for a few seconds, "Why should I not run alone in the elections?" That tells you how much I was overwhelmed by all of that. I was amazed by this comeback!

[Question] Do you think that you have been, somehow, the flag bearer of those on the fringe?

[Answer] In any case, I believe that I was the one through whom they recognize themselves... I remember a meeting, a very long time ago, with all the young Creoles who were dating white girls. That was some 20 years ago. They were seeking from me some kind of legitimacy.

[Question] Your private life has been the topic of gossip and still is. One can wonder if it has not compromised your political career...

[Answer] It has certainly been prejudicial to it. Some of the bourgeois remained with me because they feared the Indians. Fear brings total forgetfulness. When you are drowning, you could not care less who is offering you his hand, be it black, yellow or even that of a Martian. These bourgeois were so afraid of independence and of the Indians, that they decided to disregard all the traits of mine they disliked. A bourgeois who is afraid is ready for all compromises, what am I saying, for all surrenders! When they were no longer afraid after the independence, and especially when Berenger became an alternative, they began saying: "My dear, Gaetan goes too far!"

[Question] Did you ever not "go too far?"

[Answer] I sure did! I was going to tell you that. I provoked people. It was gratuitous provocation.

[Question] Was it deliberate?

[Answer] I don't think so. In my subconscious perhaps. I believe that at the point I lost control of myself... I was embittered by what I perceived as a lack of gratitude. I did not have the detachment, serenity, and calm that I have today... It is a little like what happens with love: we act spitefully. We provoke because we cannot do otherwise. We don't give a dam. We want to see how far in the provocation we can go. We want to be desperate and we succeed.

[Question] Does your past scare you a little when you reflect upon it?

[Answer] It is an era that I examine with some regret...

[Question] The era of all audacities?

[Answer] A little like that, yes...

[Question] Was /"Black Power"/ [in English] part of these audacities?

[Answer] Yes. "Black Power" and other things. For example, when I insulted that poor Yves Ravat. I regret it. Those are things that I regret very much. More than that: I am ashamed... They were moments of spitefulness. I thought I was saving Mauritius and it was driving me wild to see that people kept on distancing themselves from me. I had the feeling that I was saving them despite themselves...

[Question] Were you that pretentious?

[Answer] Tell me... I realized it much later. I remember one day when Maurice Paturau took me to task in a meeting because I was demanding the boycott of Le MaURicien. It was during a meeting of pure and die-hard conservatives. As you know, the bourgeois has the extraordinary habit of putting his neck in the noose... As soon as he does so, he prays that the noose will not be tightened! The bourgeois has a sort of desperate eagerness against himself that is akin to tragedy. Bourgeois society as a whole, in all the countries of the world, has suicidal tendencies.

[Question] Did you not at some point in your life act like a bourgeois?

[Answer] Never!

[Question] How did you manage to get 44 percent of essentially bourgeois votes? It must be because they could relate to you in some way...

[Answer] That is the miracle... I ask the question another way: had I been a bourgeois, would I have succeeded in gathering 44 percent of bourgeois votes? I personally do not think so. Would Raymond Rivet or Maurice Lesage have succeeded in doing so? I say no. I attracted the bourgeois by my nonbourgeois side. Maybe I stood for the share of the dream dormant in each man, which he cannot satisfy because he is shackled by his bourgeois condition and lifestyle. You know, people identified themselves with me for a long time. I often saw on the



bourgeois' faces how they vicariously enjoyed themselves when, for example, I would kiss Brigitte Bardot...

[Question] When you realized that your private life was hindering your political one, a decision certainly had to be made...

[Answer] For a while, I drank a lot; I behaved badly, in hotels... I believe that I behaved shockingly. It was a very bad period. I made love in a plane, before Sir Cassam Moolan to boot. I was coming out of the VIP room when I saw two young women staring at me. When I boarded the plane, the two young women requested to be seated next to me. They told me: "We would like to know which one of us you would like to make love to..." I told them that I agreed. I began to feel, caress, and kiss both of them and I finally chose the one I liked best. We subsequently spread some blankets and we went into action... I would not do such things now.

[Question] You were the minister of foreign affairs at the time?

[Answer] Yes. I was not sufficiently in control of myself. It was not the thing to do to accept, just like that, the provocation of two young women. It was not serious.

[Question] Did you discover transcendental meditation a little while later?

[Answer] A little later. The discovery of meditation led me above all to the discovery of myself... It has now been 10 years.

[Question] What did you discover by discovering yourself: the existence of a complex and paradoxical man?

[Answer] I understood that to be Me, it was not necessary to do all what I had done. I understood that what people might think was not very important.

[Question] Can a politician assert such a thing?

[Answer] I always said what I thought. I learned to change vivid colors into pastel. The shades are less pronounced. I learned to accept that gray stood between black and white. I was able to escape Manicheanism. There once were good people and bad people. Which led me to question anew certain very strong relationships that stood out as milestones in my life...

[Question] Are you thinking about someone in particular?

[Answer] Andre Masson... I think about him with great affection. At one time, I even thought of renewing relations, but it did not happen for various reasons. I understood his point of view differently.

[Question] Before meditation, were you ever tuned to others?

[Answer] People think that I do not listen to others. It is entirely untrue. Even if sometimes I give the impression of not listening. I compare my mind to a computer. I can

take in masses of data. I sort them out; then I choose; and I finally make a decision. But this decision is often based on all the talks I may have had with people whom I love and value. The importance that a man like Monaf Fakira may have had on my decisions is rather substantial. There is Monaf, my brother Herve, Nicol Francois... I am far from being stubborn...

[Question] Were you embarrassed to see your private life laid out, like that, before the public?

[Answer] No. Not really. I am an extrovert. Let us say...that I like voyeurs! I like them. I help them. It is my nature. There are people who could not make love before a crowd. It personally does not bother me a bit. On the contrary. I would wait for the applause!

[Question] Are not you, in some way, a showman?

[Answer] I would not go so far. I do not see myself in Holland making love in a shop window, or in a night club. But it is true that inside myself I feel like a showman...

[Question] Are you always performing?

[Answer] Maybe. I am a ham if that is what you are trying to say. I feel very much like a ham. That is why I have so many friends in show business. Artists regard me as one of them. We experience life the same way. I have very deep relationships with artists. We recognize each other.

[Question] Are your best friends in show business?

[Answer] Among others. But I have solid friendships in the political world. I am thinking of Michel Debre, Louis Virapoulle, his son Jean-Paul... I sometimes feel the need to meet these people. Debre, for example. We are very different, but meetings with him are extraordinarily rewarding. I am thinking of Leopold Sedar Senghor. People who guided me in the first paths of democracy.

[Question] A South African newspaper was recently mentioning your "bisexuality." How do you view this kind of article?

[Answer] I heard about that article... But I do not know what that journalist was talking about. Someone hinted that it was Paul Berenger who had given him that story. But Berenger called me to tell me that he had nothing to do with it.

[Question] Does it bother you that people are talking about your "bisexuality?"

[Answer] Very much so. I do not like for people to talk about things that are mine alone. Do you understand that? I could not care less to talk about these things if I were the only one involved. But there is my son, Xavier... Furthermore, I am now a grandfather...

[Question] If I understand you well, you are deeply conservative...



[Answer] No. I simply do not want to inconvenience my children. I do not want to embarrass them. Especially Xavier, who is conservative. When people have children, they no longer belong to themselves...

[Question] Do you think that your "bisexuality" embarrasses your kin?

[Answer] Could people stop using this word "bisexuality?" It is so inelegant. It seems to lead to the belief that people can have two genders...

[Question] Would that be too good to be true?

[Answer] *(Roaring laughter, followed by a long silence, then Sir Gaetan continues):* I prefer to say that I like boys. I find that more elegant. *(New moment of silence)* You know, there is no limit to beauty. Men are the ones who place limits on beauty. Beauty has no gender. It is similar to liking a painting or a sunrise. It is a worship of esthetics... This reminds me of a witticism by Oscar Wilde who was being accused in court of having kissed a

boy: "How can you say such a thing! Did you take a look at that boy? He was awfully ugly!..."

[Question] Have you discussed your homosexuality outside your circle of friends?

[Answer] No. Never. But it is true that talking about it today frees me a little.

[Question] Does it keep you prisoner?

[Answer] No. It is not that either. I bear it very well. I think everybody was able to ascertain that. But let us say that to discuss it, like that, for the first time, enables me to define this concept, not for me, it was already done, but for the others... A journalist asked me to make a "study" of my case. I have always refused...

*Sir Gaetan calls one of his friends and asks him to serve something to drink. Modestly, without further explanation, he stops the conversation and begins talking about his dog "Nefertiti," which, the rumor has it, is extremely intelligent.*

**Chapter 8: "Loyalty Can Explain a Compromise"**

[Question] Can anyone ever know precisely why he entered politics?

[Answer] Circumstances, to a great extent, determine a man's future. I could very well have been a Supreme Court judge today, had I chosen, at the time, to become a judge. There is a kind of latent determinism that creates opportunities. I believe that Mauritius would have invented Ramgoolam and Duval had they not existed. Our presence on the political scene at a precise moment in our history had something predetermined about it. I believe the same thing about Berenger. Nature hates a vacuum...

[Question] Do you believe that you influenced the determinism of which you speak?

[Answer] There never is total determinism. Some will is involved. For me, one thing is certain: a political career cannot be planned in minute details. One is born a poet; one becomes an orator. It is only with time that we learn to speak, and since speaking and intelligence are usually involved in politics, we never know if we are going to master correctly the art of speaking. There are very intelligent people who never master perfectly the art of speaking. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was among the latter. His brilliant intelligence was never reflected in his speech. I remember my own case, my first meeting at the Plaine Verte, my first stammerings... I think people listened because they were polite. Ramgoolam was another type of politician. He was more calculating, more of a strategist than a leader of men. His meetings were rather dull. It was only in 1983, in a serious and dangerous situation, that I saw him being convincing. Maurice Lesage said something very appropriate one day about "Chacha": "Ramgoolam has the gift for joining the procession just as it is about to reach the church." I find that rather correct and amusing. He is a man who, way back, saw the outline of his career. I believe that he had planned almost everything. He pitted people against each other. Truly, a great strategist! It was not due to the strength of his speech that he was able to compel recognition from people like Millien, Forget, Seeneevassen, or Rozemont. Ramgoolam was a committee man. He knew every detail of his cases and always ended up getting what he wanted. On the other hand, he had an extraordinary way of communicating with people one on one. He had a tremendous force of persuasion in his personal contact with people.

[Question] Can ties between politicians be called friendships?

[Answer] Friendship is such a sacred, magical and serious word, that I hesitate to use it to qualify the relationships that I may have had with politicians. Politics often consists of insulting one another one day, only to seat side by side the next. How can we speak about friendship in such cases? I never insult my friends... Let us say that I feel respect and regard for some politicians. These two words are more suitable to characterize these

relationships. I want to mention a case in which friendship remained, despite difference in political choices. During the last elections of 1987, I campaigned for the Alliance in the No 14 district, with Lewis Moutou, the MMM candidate, in the opposite camp. Lewis and I had studied together in Great Britain. We were together in the student union and we had shared a friendship. I carried out my whole campaign without ever mentioning his name and, naturally, without saying a word against him. I believe that he did the same. That is the meaning of friendship. He was an excellent friend of mine and that did not change, although we took separate paths.

[Question] Who is the person with whom you identify the most?

[Answer] My adoptive son, Richard Duval. I recognize in him my manner of charming people; I recognize a certain kindness; and this sort of never fulfilled need to seduce, this visceral need to love.

[Question] Who is the person, older than you, who could say: "I recognize myself in Gaetan Duval?"

[Answer] Jacques Chaban Delmas. I have always somewhat recognized myself in that man who is from the right without being so.

[Question] Are there faults that you admire and qualities that you tolerate?

[Answer] There are many. The first quality that I despise is the practice of strict justice. I hate those who claim to be just. It is a quality that is too close to hypocrisy. I do not like those people who do not hesitate to give to men the "pound of flesh" (in English) that they demand. I made mine Valery's saying: "To understand is to forgive." That is what sometimes prevents me from functioning. Justice is sometimes stamped with cruelty, which is one of earth's worst evils.

[Question] Are you thinking about the death penalty when you speak in this manner?

[Answer] Probably. The death penalty is part of this strict justice. This Shylock aspect... How shocking!

[Question] Transcendental meditation is an integral part of your life. Do you believe that, through its practice, you have been able to perceive the presence of something greater than man?

[Answer] Transcendental meditation is nothing more than a technique, something totally mechanical, which enables you to empty your mind, to clean it. It is the daily maintenance of the mind. To be sure, since it empties the mind, it puts you in a position to receive things that you probably would not have perceived had your mind been cluttered.

[Question] What are the "things" that you have received?

[Answer] I received myself. Fulfillment is only found within oneself. God is within ourselves. He is neither in a church, nor in a temple.

[Question] You have just turned 57. Do we really know ourselves at that age?

[Answer] Partially, yes. I believe that I know myself, but I am happy sometimes to surprise myself still. I believe that I know myself because I truly made an effort. I have vigorously tried to get acquainted with myself.

[Question] What did you discover?

[Answer] My weaknesses, the harm that I may have caused consciously or unconsciously. I try not to fall back into the same weaknesses.

[Question] Are you becoming a spiritualist by any chance?

[Answer] I believe that I am, to some degree... Certainly...

[Question] In 30 years of political life, have you been able to come up with a precise definition of the Mauritian "homo sapiens?"

[Answer] The Mauritian is special. At the same time, his peculiarities are not frozen. Interactions are constantly at work. I can only talk about the Mauritians' reaction to me. Each person can only talk for himself in that type of thing. People react differently with me. I believe that love is one of the strongest emotions on this earth. Everything is possible when someone senses that you love him. He is transformed, he is no longer the same man.

[Question] Is Garcia Marquez right in saying that love is "the only ideology?"

[Answer] Absolutely. I do not believe that anyone loved the Mauritian people more than I did. I am saying the Mauritian people, not Mauritius. I do not believe that anyone received as much love in return...

[Question] Did you not become slightly megalomaniac because of this "love?"

[Answer] Even a dose of megalomania is acceptable in love, the final goal being so strong. The other day, in the Beau Bassin Church, as I was walking in the central nave, children smiled at me with radiant faces and I was overwhelmed. Children sense people who love them and they return that love.

[Question] Could you leave everything for love?

[Answer] Yes. Undoubtedly. I often fall in love. Richard, my adoptive son, was telling me the other day: "What gives, Gaetan, are you sick?" When I asked him why he was asking me that question, he answered: "It has been at least one month since you have fallen in love!"

[Question] Could you ditch your political career for love, or do you have second thoughts about the virtues of love?

[Answer] If that love came to pass, I would abandon everything and leave.

[Question] Have you totally embraced your mixed heritage? You who was so often seen in the role of the student opposite everything that came from the European continent.

[Answer] I have, for a long time now. I am no longer even aware of my mixed heritage. I, therefore, embrace nothing, I am. At one time, I felt that my mixed heritage was the condition of a superior man.

[Question] Are not you, to some degree, a mixture of mythomania and megalomania?

[Answer] The politician is more often a megalomaniac than a mythomaniac. In the course of an election, I have often seen very intelligent men become idiot megalomaniacs. Robert Rey, for example. In the latest elections, he believed that he was going to be elected thinking that he was running with 10,000 guaranteed votes. He finished the race with 1,000 votes. Two things make idiots of people: horse races and politics.

[Question] We can, therefore, assume that you are well prepared to reach the height of imbecility?

[Answer] Look at the latest elections: I firmly believed that we were going to crush the MMM in Beau Bassin. I sincerely thought so when I called the newspapers. We were beaten 2 to 1. I now understand that Paul Berenger was really of good faith when he said that he was going to get a two-thirds majority. All things considered, he was not far from the truth. We both made a slight mistake. I would have bet everything on a victory at the poll beyond the 55 percent, especially after the Quatre Bornes meeting... It is true that we become slightly megalomaniac, even when we try to be careful...

[Question] You were adored when you were 30 years old, rejected at 40, then rehabilitated at 50. Did this leave deep marks on you political beliefs?

[Answer] It makes you very humble. It is imperative to know in politics that the wheel will turn. I cannot help but be saddened, really saddened, when I see that Paul Berenger was not elected in Quatre Bornes. If people could always remember that the wheel turns, many errors could be avoided. Arrogance would disappear. When politicians succeed, they often believe it will last forever. That is what makes the future sadder and more bitter. Look at my son Xavier. He went into politics quietly, without arrogance, and I appreciate that very much. It reminds me of an incident that happened when I was housing minister in 1965. I refused to let the orderly carry my attache case. Much later, when I was no longer a minister, I went to that ministry to see Razack Mohamed. The orderly told me: "May I carry your attache case now that you no longer are a minister?" I



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FBIS-APR-89-216-S  
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accepted because, in that case, it was a gratuitous gesture filled with friendship. Those little things are what differentiate a real politician from a "tinhorn."

[Question] In your opinion are there many real politicians in Mauritius?

[Answer] There still are some. Jugnauth and Berenger certainly are. They are men who feel that they have a mission to accomplish. They are not in politics to become deputy or minister. They are the real ones.

[Question] Do not "mission" and career often merge into one another?

[Answer] It so happens that they never have for me. When one has a mission to accomplish, crossing the wilderness presents no problem, to the extent that the pursuit of the mission remains the same. On the other hand, when a career is ready to be relegated to the sideline, it hurts tremendously. You will see that Berenger will do his crossing with no problem, for he is a man bolstered by an ideal. He is not a careerist.

[Question] What is your "mission?"

[Answer] With hindsight, I would say that my first aim was to reconcile the Mauritian people and then protect freedom by setting up an economic prosperity based on a pro-Western choice. That is what I came to do in politics. I believe that, to some extent, I have succeeded. But the fight for liberties must still continue, for these liberties are never fully acquired. They rely on a feeling of security as experienced by a government. A government that does not feel secure presents a potential danger for its people. The Mauritian people are driven by freedom. They are in love with their freedom, but they must not forget that it is not enough. The Poles, like the Mauritians, were also lovers of freedom: it did not prevent them from losing it. Vigilance is imperative and these freedoms must constantly be reconquered. I always thought that economic progress was one of the most favorable conditions for the development of these freedoms.

[Question] During your press interviews, you have often spoken about loyalty toward your friends. Did not this loyalty lead you to compromises?

[Answer] Loyalty must be defined on the basis of the mission one has set for oneself. In 1967, I wanted the Mauritians to have free access to Europe. I lost the elections. I was unable to do anything about it. I pursued the same goal while shifting my tactics: by entering into the 1969 coalition, I was able to conduct this pro-European policy that bore fruit. Unfortunately I never was able to obtain this free access to Europe for the Mauritians. It continues to cause serious problems to our citizens.

[Question] I wanted to talk to you more precisely about your loyalty to your friends...

[Answer] Loyalty can explain a compromise. Yes. For me, loyalty can explain perjury. The loyalty of a friendship, what strength!

[Question] This is a serious statement in the mouth of a man of law...

[Answer] Once again I will return to this concept of abstract justice that I do not like. Take for example the Ted Kennedy affair that ruined his career because, it has been said, he was drunk. If I were his friend, I can see myself very well appearing in court and saying that he was not drunk. It would have changed nothing to the circumstances of the tragedy, but by friendship and loyalty, I would have helped this friend.

[Question] And if we were to think that it is what happened in the Azor Adelaide affair?

[Answer] In no way was it so. To be sure, one must not do just anything to help a friend. It suffices to know when to stop.

[Question] A political career is satisfactory when, at the end of the trail, the goal to be reached has become a routine certitude for the politician. What is your goal?

[Answer] My goal was to participate fully in the management of this country and to convince the Mauritians that the best political system is still liberalism and truth is not found in class struggles. I do not believe that it is bad if the rich become richer, but at the same time, the poor must become less poor. This is currently happening in Mauritius. But having said that, I can see very well that other political systems may be more advantageous for other countries. I believe, for example, that communism was very good for China. When that country was "liberal," men were dying of hunger while being able to protest against the regime. Today, they do not enjoy all freedoms, but at least they eat enough. Everything is a question of priority in life... Who could condemn the communist regime for having provided what is the very basis of any state, namely, the ability for its population to eat and to cloth itself, therefore to live more or less decently? The freedom to eat may be one of the greatest, no?

[Question] When you are politically at your happiest, are you capable of all audacities, that of thinking, for example, that you could be prime minister of Mauritius?

[Answer] I have given up this idea since the 1967 elections. In fact, I forgot it very quickly. The day I entered into the coalition, I knew that I would never be prime minister. I still know it today. Furthermore, it is no longer important to me.

[Question] Why? Because the idea is not feasible?

[Answer] To the extent that it would not bring anything further to the country, I have no reason to be prime minister. The PMSD ideas are in the government as never before. Everybody agrees: from the MMM to the Labor Party, to the MSM. Only two remain, LALIT and

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the OMT [Militant Organization of the Workers]/FNAS [Anti-Sufferance National Front], that need to follow. It may come some day, who knows... I would even go further: it will be very difficult for any government to change the style of development chosen by Mauritius. Even if the PMSD were to leave the government, its ideas would continue to be implemented. If the MMM were to seize power, the only thing that would change would be the issue of trust toward foreign countries.

[Question] The PMSD worm is in the fruit and no one will do anything about it?

[Answer] That is one way of putting it. To get back to the implementation of my ideas, look at, for example, the International Sea Festival. Before, there would have been much reticence about letting the people enjoy themselves. Today, besides Berenger who voiced a few criticisms, everybody accepts very well that the people should play... I maintain that it is a very good thing.

[Question] Bread and games?... You are strong on demagoguery, no?

[Answer] Why not, if it is accompanied by work... There is no shame to enjoying oneself. It is the PMSD, with its down-to-earth side, which succeeded in making the people understand that.

[Question] The "Jalsa" rule, in other words?...

[Answer] Our people have a Latin temperament: they love to play, laugh, and dance. How can we ask them to be stern?

[Question] Your son Xavier entered into politics and one senses that he enjoys your unconditional support. Does this choice gratify you?

[Answer] It frees me...

[Question] Of what?

[Answer] Of the years to come. I am happy with his choice. It is a little too early to determine how he will assume his political responsibilities. He will have to think about the type of image that he wants to project. I believe that no one wants a duplicate of Gaetan Duval. Xavier is another thing, another style. This choice frees me to the extent that I will be able to tell those who insist that I remain: "Go see my son!"

[Question] Sir Gaetan, you live in luxury and we can assume that money is no problem. Can we think that it made you a slave?

[Answer] It did not make me a slave. Money runs after you when you scorn it. I have seldom lacked money during my political career. When I look at it from today's vantage point, I am surprised to see how I could have maintained such a standard of living. I probably earned a lot of money. Also, there are people who give me things, just like that. I believe there is also the fact that, to some degree, I have become a legend...

[Question] You do not seem to have a low opinion of yourself...

[Answer] I am simply sharing with you my inner thoughts. Prince Andrew was telling me the other day: /"You are a living legend. How can it be?"/ [in English] What you really are plus what people invent is a very good definition for a legend!

[Question] You are pleased that people are "inventing" you...

[Answer] Let us say that I let them do it!

[Question] Can we image Gaetan Duval without all the pomp that surrounds him?

[Answer] Quite so. Furthermore, I am going to let you in on something: I will soon be leaving Grande Gaube. It has become too much of a burden for me. I am going to look for a small house somewhere... Therefore, Grande Gaube will only have been a chance happening in my life. It never was meant to last forever! Should I retire from political life, I would like to have the luxury of working or not. If I do not work, that house will be too expensive to maintain. I feel like doing something else. I don't know what. Meanwhile, I do not want to be a slave to money. There are books that I still have not read. If I have one hunger, it is to read all the books that were ever written. I would also like to become interested in the occult. It is not without good reason that I have pyramids and other objects of that kind in my house.

[Question] You are interested in Egyptology?

[Answer] I would like to discover the mystery of the three sides of the triangle. Discovering all these things is fascinating. It will go very well with the solitary house that I intend to build when I leave Grand Gaube. The other day, while in the helicopter, I discovered a small place in the vicinity of Montagne Blanche. A small hill surrounded by water... Sublime!

[Question] We heard so much about your retirement from politics that it remains appropriate to question it...

[Answer] You wait and see. If I have not yet left, it is because my brother Herve is making me feel guilty. He tells me that the PMSD is not recovering faster because each time it is ready to soar, I announce my departure. I think the moment to leave has come...

[Question] Have you set a departure date?

[Answer] If you respect yourself, once your mission is accomplished, it is always time to leave. Furthermore, I cannot take working like that any longer: receiving hundreds of people every month and meeting journalists and businessmen. I feel like freeing myself. The very fact that I have decided to leave makes me work twice as hard. I want my name to stand for a man who did his job conscientiously and who was not selfish.

[Question] Have you already thought about how you will spend your time once you leave politics?

[Answer] I will be able to read all day, go horseback riding and see movies. I have simple tastes, you know. I will also write, travel, go see friends. In all simplicity...

[Question] With, just by chance, Paris Match journalists in the neighborhood?

[Answer] Not at all. That is not among my worries. I believe that my friends will remain my friends, whether I am the prime minister or a simple citizen.

[Question] You once said: "I have lied so much in my life that I am no longer interested in doing so." Nevertheless, what if it was the case one more time?

[Answer] Lying is an evil absolutely necessary to life. We are all liars. The worse liars are those who lie to themselves. Children are the greatest liars. They are the most deadly witnesses for a lawyer. They never have the last word with me because they know that I know that they are liars.

[Question] Are you a gambler?

[Answer] No. I only bet on horse races when my horses are running. Neither am I a gambler when it comes to life.

[Question] Is not the fear of going unnoticed one of your greatest fears?

[Answer] I think so. It must be terrible. To me, it is more than a fear, it is almost a phobia. As Sacha Guitry used to say: "The worse that can happen, besides belonging to Paris high society, is not belonging." Yes. I am afraid. I am afraid of this anonymity that slowly kills people. When you have been a public man, you must make very great efforts to adapt to anonymity. To land in an airport without being greeted by a hostess, to board a plane without someone coming to get you...

[Question] Basically, does not power gets down to that?

[Answer] In any case, it is one of the most interesting aspects of power. It is so gratifying to one's ego! When we

decide that we are going to leave politics, we must prepare ourselves to forget all of that. It must not be easy.

[Question] What did you expect from life?

[Answer] I believe that it gave me almost all that I was expecting from it. The most improbable things, like a Rolls-Royce, for example... Let us be serious. Let us say that life enabled me to understand that love is above all things. It also enabled me to meet people as extraordinary as Pope Jean Paul II. I believe that I have been loved. That is a tremendous gift. I do not expect life to give me a hard time. I asked nothing of it, except to let me live. Since happiness is never final, we can expect anything.

[Question] Do you sometimes question death? What does it tell you?

[Answer] My way of questioning death is to be interested in mystical things. Life is such a precious thing that we must necessarily think about what will come afterwards. It is said that violent death leaves marks. Does death that is not violent also leave marks? That is what I want to know. I question death, but it is not very communicative, you know... I read many testimonies from people who came back from beyond.

[Question] Finally, have you been whom you wanted to be?

[Answer] I have never known precisely whom I wanted to be. That explains the way in which my life has progressed...

#### Acknowledgments

- To Mrs Marie Claire Betsey with Le Mauricien archives
- To Miss Bettina Cadinouche for correcting the manuscripts
- To Monaf Fakira for the PMSD archival photos
- To these tens of people who wanted to testify while keeping their anonymity

Without them this book would have remained a project...



**END OF**

**FICHE**

**DATE FILMED**

5 Dec 1989

